



JAIL FOR KILLER IN A SPORTS CAR

Report by Amardeep Bassey

A DRUNK driver who was racing in a sports car when he crashed into a bus shelter killing a student has been put behind bars for eight years.

Sukvinder Mannan swerved into a bus lane and ploughed his Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution into 21-year-old best friends Rebecca McManus and Harriet Barnsley at 101mph in a 40mph zone.

After the crash, Mannan, who has previous convictions for drink-driving, had been 'aggressive and vociferous' towards emergency services staff called to the scene. He was arrested but later refused to give a blood sample.

BMW M3 driver Inderjit Singh, 31, who had pulled out of the race seconds before the impact, was jailed for one year at Wolverhampton Crown Court.



Sukvinder Mannan

Barnsley spent four months in hospital after suffering 'life changing' injuries.

Garage manager Mannan, of Roundhills, Halesowen, remained impassive as judge Kristin Montgomery told him: "You drove with arrogant disregard and contempt for other road users and the indications, by your own admissions, is that you had been drinking alcohol."

"For around a mile you played cat and mouse driving at grossly excessive speeds and both of you were consumed by your competition. It was almost inevitable one of you would lose control and have a collision."

Mannan initially denied swerving into the bus lane and later claimed he had never seen the BMW let alone raced it. But he eventually pleaded guilty to two counts of causing death and serious injury by dangerous driving.

Turning to a tearful Singh, a computer engineer, of Cranbourne Avenue, Ettingshall, the judge said: "I sentence you for the way you drove up to the point that you withdrew from the race, a decision you took split seconds before Mannan crashed. You encouraged Mannan to speed."

Singh had been acquitted of two counts of causing death and serious injury by dangerous driving by a jury last week but had admitted dangerous driving.

HELP NEEDED TO BRING POWER TO HISTORIC GARDEN



Project manager Mick Freer in the walled garden at Leasowes Park which needs sponsorship to raise £10,500 to reconnect electricity

A HERITAGE group has launched a fund-raising campaign to reconnect electricity to a Grade-I listed walled garden in Halesowen as part of a major £1 million overhaul of the site.

Volunteers have been working tirelessly with owner Halesowen Abbey Trust to restore the hidden gem at Leasowes Park.

The project has captured people's imagination with more than 100 people giving their time to help.

Now the group is appealing for sponsors to raise £10,500 to reconnect electricity at the site.

Mick Freer, acting honorary secretary, said: "This would make an enormous difference and would allow us to do so much more."

Generosity

He added: "Without the generosity of our volunteers, who give their labour and expertise freely, the improvements to date would have cost considerably more than they have - 8,500 hours of work, at say £5 per hour, would be £42,500 and, with the skills shown, it would have cost considerably more than that. The project would not have been possible without our wonderful and loyal volunteers and supporters."

The group is looking for sponsorship and businesses that would like to donate to the redevelopment of the site.

Members plan to plant orchids on December 12 with people sponsoring each one.

The 'secret' garden has been in existence since the 18th century when it was landscaped by poet William Shostone.

Halesowen Abbey Trust managed to raise £20,000 within 12 weeks to fund the purchase of the garden from Stourbridge College.

ACCIDENT

Appeal to find driver after road tragedy

A MAN has died after being hit by a car in Amblecote. The 66-year-old was treated by paramedics at the scene in High Street but died later.

Officers were called to the junction of Brettell Lane at around 6.50pm on Sunday following reports that a car had hit a man.

Police are appealing to the driver of a dark 4x4 to come forward. A 25-year-old man, who was the driver of a red Vauxhall Corsa, was arrested on suspicion of death by dangerous driving. He was later released on police bail. West Midlands Police are appealing for information on 101.

DEATH

Pensioner hit by car at hospital has died

A PENSIONER hit by a car on a hospital car park has died from his injuries.

Ivan Tranter, aged 83, suffered head injuries when a vehicle reversed into him at Russells Hall Hospital where he had an appointment on November 3.

He received treatment and was released from hospital. Later his condition deteriorated and he died in hospital in Birmingham on Friday.

Police have spoken to the driver involved and are appealing for witnesses to come forward. Call police on 101.

COURT

Doormen are held after man is killed

TWO doormen have been charged with murder after the death of a man at a charity event being held at Samsons Banqueting Suite in Rood End Road, Oldbury, on November 22.

Nicolas Salhan, aged 36, from Haybridge Avenue, Stourbridge, and Jonathan Davies, 42, of Old Bridge Walk, Rowley Regis, have been charged with the murder of Mr Inderjit Singh Dhariwal, a 49-year-old father from Langley, and appeared at Wolverhampton Crown Court on Monday.

The pair were remanded in custody and are due to appear before the court again in April.

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Last chance for campaign to save venue

CAMPAIGNERS hoping to rescue Dudley Hippodrome from the wrecker's ball have one last chance to save the landmark venue.

Proposals revealed by Dudley Council earlier last week threaten the end for the historic theatre on Castle Hill by bulldozing it to be replaced with a landscaped public space.

However, after a meeting with the council on Friday, Friends of Dudley Hippodrome chairman Gordon Downing said the group had been given until the end of the year to form a 'viable business plan' to redevelop the Hippodrome.

Mr Downing said: "We've been given until the end of December to come up with a viable business plan filling in all the areas they want filled in.

"In that time we've got to get together a professional looking plan in some form or other. I'd like to appeal to anybody out there if they can help us draw up that plan."

Councillors will be asked at a meeting today (Thu) about whether to submit their planning application for flattening the building and replacing it with a landscaped public space.

Councillor Khurshid Ahmed said members had considered a number of proposals for the building in the past five years, but all alternatives had failed.

However, he said that if someone comes to the authority with a firm, viable proposal to redevelop the theatre then the council will still consider this

– even as their own proposal to knock down the building progresses.

Councillor Ahmed, cabinet member for planning and economic development, said: "We want to see the Hippodrome brought back to life, if it can be. But no-one has come forward with a business plan that showed they could actually bring it back into use as a theatre.

"If, at any stage, someone comes to us with a firm plan – with the money needed – then obviously we will look at it. If the Friends group suddenly come to us with £10 million to redevelop the Hippodrome why wouldn't we want to do that? But they've been working for three years on a plan and nothing has come forward."

Outrage at scheme to demolish Hippodrome

THE founder of the new Dudley Civic Society has hit out at Dudley Council over its plans to demolish the town's Hippodrome theatre.

Despite a lengthy campaign by supporters to see it restored to its former glory, council chiefs want to pull the historic theatre down and replace it with an outdoor exhibition area.

It comes just weeks after interested parties were given the chance to put forward proposals to redevelop the venue but these applications failed to convince council planners.

Steve Briscoe, who is forming a society to safeguard the town's heritage, has slammed the plans, saying it contradicts what the council has previously said about boosting tourism.

Historic

He said: "I think it's disgusting the way the council has gone about this decision. The Dudley area is being promoted as a place of tourism, but how can this be when they're knocking down one of its most historic landmarks?"

"The Black Country Museum has been done up and the Hippodrome could have complimented it very well if it was to be revamped. I just can't believe how short sighted the council has been. They've shown no passion or ambition for this project and I feel to knock the Hippodrome down just undermines Dudley town further. They're using austerity as a weapon and it's a very sad situation to be in."

A leading campaigner said he fears that £1 million of taxpayers' money will be to be used to flatten the 1930s-built venue, which once hosted such stars as Laurel and Hardy and George Formby.

Dudley Council revealed last week that it would seek to knock down the theatre to create an 'open space' near the entrance to Dudley Zoo on Castle Hill.



An artist's impression of the plan for the Hippodrome site, looking towards the old cinema on Dudley's Castle Hill

Malcolm Palmer, who founded the Friends of Dudley Hippodrome alongside the late Geoff Fitzpatrick, said it was 'terrible' news having only learned of its fate after reading about it in the Express & Star.

Dudley Council is yet to reveal how much it will cost to demolish the theatre but Mr Palmer claimed those costs could spiral. "It will cost a lot to demolish it with the asbestos—this is at a time when the council is looking to make cuts. I think it could cost maybe £1m at a time when they are supposed to be cutting back."

Gordon Downing, chairman of the Friends of Dudley Hippodrome, said: "This is absolutely diabolical. To come out and pronounce it like this is disgraceful.

"If they think we're walking away from this without a fight then they've got another thing coming."

The council move, which is being discussed by its cabinet today (Thu), marks the latest – and perhaps final – twist in the long-running saga to try to bring the venue back into use.

The former theatre and bingo hall would be bulldozed with a sweeping open public space in its place.

Councillor Khurshid Ahmed said members had considered a number of proposals for the building in the past five year.

He said: "This has been a long-running issue and we have fully explored every suggested alternative use submitted so far. But after giving people every opportunity we need to draw a line under this. The cost of securing the building is also hitting taxpayers in the pocket and we cannot continue to bear the costs of consultants to appraise unviable projects."

● Final Curtain – Page 6

Sir Lenny is to pave the way in his home town

SIR Lenny Henry will be in Dudley next week to unveil his MOBO Awards paving stone in his home town.

The MOBO (Music of Black Origin) Paving The Way award, which celebrates trailblazers and the influential in music and the arts, was presented to Sir Lenny at the awards ceremony earlier this month.

Recipients of the award are honoured with a permanent paving stone laid in a place which has shaped them. It is intended as a way of shining a light on their achievements to inspire generations to come.

Sir Lenny has chosen for his paving stone to be laid at Buffery Park, which is near the home where he grew up. It MOBO slab will be unveiled on Wednesday, December 9.

The actor and comedian had the audience on its feet during his award acceptance speech at the ceremony in Leeds as he said he 'could only have got here from standing on the shoulders of giants'.

He went on to name-check famous names from Bob Marley to Michael Jackson and 'that bloke from the Halifax advert' while accepting the Paving The Way award.

Lenny said: "It's an honour to say you've paved the way for people because my career isn't over. I don't feel like anything's finished yet."

He added: "It's a huge honour. I'm very, very happy. It's wonderful."

Lenny Henry is already a freeman of Dudley borough and a CBE. He was one of the founders of Comic Relief.

Merry Hill now trumps Bullring

BRIERLEY Hill's Intu Merry Hill is the top West Midlands shopping centre in a new guide.

Trevor Wood Associates' Going Shopping 2016: The Definitive Guide to Shopping Centres has Merry Hill is in eighth place nationally, ahead of Birmingham's Bullring in 14th and The Telford Shopping Centre in 20th. The Bullring has slipped two places from 12th last year.

London area shopping centres Westfield Stratford City, Bluewater and Westfield London were at the top of the table.

The researchers examined all 764 shopping centres in the UK.

LaSalle retained its position as leading owner/investment manager and Merry Hill owner Intu Properties number one direct property owner.

Rock 'n' roll on the menu at restaurant

A RETRO 1950s-style American diner is opening at Merry Hill shopping centre on Monday. The Ed's Easy Diner at Intu Merry Hill will feature 1950s decor, a menu offering burgers, hotdogs and shakes, and a jukebox featuring hits from the rock 'n' roll era.

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£4,000 for archway at vandal-hit town park

A COMMUNITY group which aims to transform a crime-hit park in Halesowen has been awarded more than £4,000 to build a gate, railings and feature archway.

Hawne Park, off Stourbridge Road, had previously been a magnet for vandals, drug addicts and thieves.

But a newly-formed group, Friends of Hawne Park, came together after 19 burglaries in the area last year and have now been given £4,350 to revamp the park.

Formed by residents of Carol Crescent, with backing from Belle Vale councillors Ian Cooper, Donella Russell and Simon Phipps, the group has made progress in its aims to make the park more secure and inviting.

The feature archway will be built at the Short Street entrance to the park.

Councillor Simon Phipps said: "I've been working with Friends of Hawne Park for around a year now and seen how much hard work and dedication they've put into this project.

"It's really good news and the start of something special happening for the park.

"Residents should be proud of their area and it will be great to see how the park looks once it is all finished."

The friends' group said many break-ins happened in the area as thieves hid in the park's overgrown bushes and woodland.

After Sandra McHardy's neighbour was burgled, she decided to pull together with husband Jim and neighbour Paul Thurlow to create the Friends of Hawne Park.

Opening date for £5m care home

A 66-bed care complex in Halesowen will open in September next year, it has been revealed.

It will replace the former 1960s Shenstone Care Home which was demolished two months ago, as well as creating 42 jobs.

The £5 million plan was given the green-light in July.

All 31 residents were moved and 51 staff redeployed within Dudley Council's care service after it was closed by the authority three years ago. This came after it was declared as not fit for purpose.

The three-storey centre provided by Black Country Housing Group will include rooms adapted for people with dementia and six bungalows for independent living. All en-suite.

Santa has set up his grotto at zoo

THE latest addition to Dudley Zoo is... Santa! Father Christmas arrived on Tuesday to meet youngsters in his grotto at the Castle Hill attraction. He will be at the zoo every day until Christmas Eve, from 10am to 4pm.

Schedule for police station closures

POLICE buildings in the Black Country will start closing from January as plans to save £8.6 million were backed by bosses at West Midlands Police.

Halesowen, Dudley, Kingswinford and Stourbridge stations will be axed, while eight other depots and storage facilities will close and be sold off, the force has confirmed.

A total of 13 Black Country sites are among 28 police buildings in the West Midlands that will shut over the next two years, reducing the number of sites by 10 per cent and bringing in £8.6m through property sales and savings on running costs. A further £3.1m will be saved on maintenance work.

Following a consultation, the move passed through the final discussion stage at a meeting of

the region's Strategic Policing and Crime Board this week. West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner David Jamieson has backed the move, and says that 'officers, not buildings' keep people safe. He is set to formally announce the closures within the next few days.

Fury

The move has sparked fury among many politicians and rank and file police officers.

Mr Jamieson said: "These changes will have no impact on response times as response officers are not based at these locations. Between 2010 and 2015 West Midlands Police was cut harder than any other force in the country which means we still have diffi-

cult decisions to make. My priority is always will be people not buildings. Many people from across the political divide have realised this."

Margot James, Tory MP for Stourbridge, has supported the move, previously saying that the closures would have 'minimal impact'.

Dudley station will go next August, with Halesowen due to close in January. Stourbridge station will shut its doors in May 2017, followed by the Kingswinford in July 2017.

James Morris, MP for Halesowen and Rowley Regis, launched a petition against the closure of Halesowen station that garnered around 700 signatures.

● Mixed messages — see page 5

Hopes high as new team take over at steel firm

"WE have clear expansion plans and hopefully this is just the shot in the arm the West Midlands needs."

Those are the words of a former Caparo boss after the firm was formally taken over by new owners, giving a lifeline to hundreds of workers in time for Christmas.

Caparo Tubular Solutions has officially begun life as Liberty Tubular Solutions.

Liberty House signs this week replaced Caparo emblems to signal a fresh start for this site and other parts of the Tubular Solutions business.

Sanjeev Gupta, group managing director of Liberty, said he is optimistic for the future and was delighted to be able to offer a new start to 333 workers – 300 in the Black Country.

"This is exciting but also sobering," he said. "We've got a lot of challenges ahead of us in this industry and a lot of work to be done but we're excited by the future vision. I recognise I have a huge responsibility."

Compelling

Mr Gupta said Liberty had decided to step in because Caparo Tubular Solutions was 'a profitable business and a successful business' so taking it over given the situation Caparo found itself was 'compelling'.

The Gupta family owns Liberty House, a steel and non-ferrous metals production and trading group which operates across the globe.

Douglas Dawson was the former chief operating officer of Caparo and has been installed as chief executive of Liberty Tubular Solutions.

"Happy is an understatement about how I feel right now," he said.

"There's a real sense of relief as well and the timing – just before Christmas – couldn't be better.

"I think the investment from the Gupta family couldn't be better sent to a magnificent workforce.

"We have clear expansion plans and hopefully this is just the shot in the arm the West Midlands needs.

"Expansion is really what's on everyone's minds now – both into Europe and worldwide."

The takeover is good news for hundreds of workers ahead of Christmas, after weeks of worry when Caparo plunged into administration.

General operator Matt Hare has worked at the site for four years. The 26-year-old from Brierley Hill said: "Obviously when we first heard it was a shock and you start to worry. I've got a family with two young kids so was definitely worried. Liberty taking over is great news."



Sanjeev Gupta, CEO of Liberty House, with Douglas Dawson, CEO tubular division, at Oldbury HQ

The Gupta family completed the purchase of Caparo Tubular Solutions, a core part of Caparo Industries PLC, from administrators PriceWaterhouseCoopers in the early hours of Saturday morning.

Caparo Tubular Solutions includes the businesses of Caparo Precision Tubes Oldbury, Caparo Tube Components and Caparo Accles and Pollock also based in Oldbury, Hub Le Bas in Bilston, and the Caparo Tubes Tredegar asset in Wales.

A total of 488 Caparo workers have been taken on through sales of the group's business units since it went into administration last month.

After the move was revealed, Russell Farrington, GMB regional organiser, said: "This is a sliver of good news for workers in the steel industry."

Announcing the sale, Matthew Hammond, Midlands region chairman for PwC and lead administrator, said: "We are delighted to have made further substantial progress with this deal.

"We had targeted selling a number of the Caparo businesses. Our deals team has successfully concluded transactions in November which preserve businesses and employment."

Caparo went into administration in October. A total of 245 jobs went at Darlaston-based Caparo Atlas Fastenings, Caparo Forging Europe in Dudley and Caparo Fairbright Wire in West Bromwich, which all closed. Plants in Cradley Heath and Oldbury saw 78 jobs go.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Choir bringing joy at festive concert

THE Voices in Harmony choir is tuning up for its annual Christmas charity concert.

Called Joy to the World, it will take place at Holy Trinity Church on Halesowen Road in Old Hill at 7pm.

Choir spokesman Bill McBain said "This is our final concert of the year. It has always been one of the choir's highlights as we hope to get everyone properly into the festive spirit."

The choir has raised more than £85,000 for good causes since it was formed. Tickets cost £7 from www.vihchoir.org or (01384) 635507.

Comedy stars in pub double bill

THERE is a top quality comedy double bill in Stourbridge tomorrow night (Fri) featuring Birmingham-born actress and comedian Jo Enright, from TV's The Job Lot, and former Black Country based Canadian comic Tom Stadel.

The double bill of top TV talent marks a comedy coup for the Fitz of Laughter Comedy Club at Katie Fitzgerald's pub in Enville Street, which is compered by Dudley comedian Wayne Beese.

Tickets are £10 and the gig starts at 8pm.

Curry chef is top of the poppadoms

A CURRY chef from Halesowen has won a national award for his food.

Kayum Ali, executive chef at Spice Fusion on Long Lane, has received the accolade at the Curry Life Chef Awards, organised by Curry Life Magazine. He was named Chef of the Year.

Mr Kayum said: "I have been working in the curry business for many years and it is a great honour to be recognised. I always put 100 per cent into my cooking and I am glad people recognise that effort."

MP's call over mental health links for schools

A MP has urged the Government to improve links between services for school pupils suffering mental health problems.

Halesowen and Rowley Regis MP James Morris said headteachers have told of a 'increased prevalence' of mental health problems among young people in schools.

He asked ministers to boost the links between schools and mental health services during a session in the House of Commons on Monday.

Christmas wrap at mall

FUSION food chain Wrapchic is to open its latest site at Intu Merry Hill before Christmas. The business, which specialises in healthy wraps and has grown from a site in Birmingham to having outlets across the UK and is looking at launching abroad, including Dubai and New York.



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THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



HOW long does technology have to be around before it appears in our dreams? A reader relates a panicky nightmare. She needed to send a text message on her smartphone but was wearing huge, unremovable mittens.

IN the opening episode of the Beeb's new drama series, *Capital*, it was allegedly Christmas Eve in London yet the sun was high in the sky and the trees were in the full leaf that goes with a green and balmy season. This "Christmas" was obviously filmed in summer. Do such errors matter? Yes, they do. These days, no-one writes drama purely to entertain. There is always a message and an agenda. In *Capital* we are introduced to the wickedness of the banking industry, the greed of property developers, the gulf between rich and poor, the unkindness of the immigration system and the anger of young Muslims. We assume that what we see has been well researched. But if they can't even get the seasons right, why should we believe any of the rest?



BENEDICT Cumberbatch plays a fashion model of indeterminate sex in *Zoolander 2*. For this he has been denounced in an online petition thus: "Cumberbatch's character is clearly portrayed as an over-the-top, cartoonish mockery of androgynous/trans/non-binary individuals." Who'd be a pantomime dame?

RESEARCH in Russia suggests people who play classical musical instruments such as the cello and harp, live longer than those twanging away on electric guitars. As the journal *Advances in Gerontology* puts it, instruments associated with "higher intellect and education" go with a longer lifespan. I fear we ukulele players are not long for this world. Higher intellect and education are not usually associated with My Little Stick of Blackpool Rock. Worryingly, George Formby only made it to 56.

THE British Army's new rapid-response brigades won't be ready for ten years. The Royal Regiment of Oxy-morons?

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

More paramedics to meet festive demand

WEST Midlands Ambulance Service will have more staff than ever in the run-up to the hectic Christmas and New Year period.

The service, which has its headquarters at The Waterfront in Brierley Hill, will be backed by more than 2,500 operational staff as bosses prepare for their most demanding time of year.

The workforce has been boosted by additional student and graduate paramedics.

The West Midlands Ambulance Service received 1,436 calls on New Year's Eve last year and experienced its busiest day ever in December.

Chiefs say the extra staff will be crucial to ensure the service is able to cope with the surge in demand.

Emergency services director Craig Cooke said: "There is little doubt that the winter is likely to be an incredibly difficult one, so the fact that we have so many more staff joining our teams is great news."

Recruit

Director of workforce Kim Nurse added: "We are continuing to recruit additional paramedics and provide training for other staff to progress towards higher levels of clinical care."

"We have made excellent progress and these new joiners demonstrate just how hard our recruitment and training departments have been working to attract and train high calibre staff that we, as a service, require."

By Richard Guttridge

Chief executive Anthony Marsh told a recent accountability meeting that the West Midlands service was not suffering staffing pressures that its counterparts elsewhere were because it 'grew its own paramedics'.

He said: "The West Midlands Ambulance Service is the only ambulance service achieving every single response time target. The other nine are failing to achieve all of them, some are only achieving one or two."

"That does not happen by accident, that it because of the commitment of our staff."

"There is a national shortage of paramedics but in the West Midlands we have no vacancies."

"There is a reason we are in a unique position. Over the last eight or nine years we have placed a huge amount of emphasis and investment on recruiting or growing our own paramedics."

Show is model of success



Alf Fantham with a wagon model and a full-sized loco

THOUSANDS of people packed out Birmingham's NEC as a Black Country club hosted the UK's largest model railway exhibition.

The Warley National Model Railway Exhibition saw enthusiasts come from far and wide.

Ex-Pop Idol judge and model rail fan Pete Waterman, a regular visitor to the show, was also in attendance. The music mogul and Walsall supporter is a model railway fanatic.

There was something extra special for visitors from the Black Country to feast their eyes on, with models of a train from West Bromwich-based Mastico W Keys, which ran between West Bromwich and Portishead between the 1920s and 60s on display, one in pristine condition and one weathered. It offered enthusiasts the chance to add to their collection, with 500 on sale at the event.

David Moorhouse, publicity officer for the Warley Model Railway Club, said: "This is the premier UK model railway event, with 90 layouts and 170 train stables."

Mr Moorhouse said the event had grown considerably in recent years.

FA's new concussion guidance welcomed

THE family of West Brom legend Jeff Astle are 'thrilled' with new FA concussion guidelines.

Astle died at 59 from chronic traumatic encephalopathy caused by heading heavy leather footballs.

Jeff's widow Laraine Astle and her daughters have been campaigning the FA to change the rules over head injuries sustained on the pitch.

In light of that campaign, the FA launched new guidelines that say all footballers - from grassroots to the Premier League - should be immediately removed from the pitch if they sustain suspected concussion during a game, or in training.

"It's absolutely marvellous, they've kept their word and we're thrilled," said 68-year-old Mrs Astle. "If it saves one life then my Jeff's death won't have been in vain."

Important

"It's more important at grassroots in some respects because there's no doctors in the tunnel. They don't have the luxury of having the doctors on hand."

"We don't want to get heading banned, we never have. What we're saying is just be careful. If it's a clash of heads or a boot to the head, come off the pitch."

The FA's guidelines have been developed by an independent expert panel of doctors set up at the request of the Astle family.

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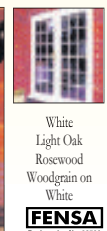
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No cigarette butt fines in four years

NOT a single person has been fined for dropping cigarette butts in Sandwell in the past four years – despite the council launching a high profile campaign.

The authority has issued zero fixed penalty notices from 2012 onwards, despite handing out more than 3,000 in the previous two years.

If fines are not imposed as a deterrent then it encourages people to litter, according to UKIP Councillor Philip Garrett. He said: “These figures are quite shocking. The council needs to set an example.”

The figures, revealed by a Freedom of Information request, show that in 2010 the authority issued 2,083 fines – receiving £72,950. In 2011 the number of fines dropped to 1,130, with £38,425 brought into council coffers. However, there have been no fixed penalty notices handed out since then.

Councillor Maria Crompton, cabinet member for highways and environment, said: “The community warden service underwent a major restructure in 2012 and merged with the park wardens, with the total number of wardens reduced by a half.

“Despite having fewer resources and additional responsibilities, our wardens still tackle litter through engagement and education, and will still issue fixed penalty notices as a last resort.”

Three days of fun to boost Leah's charity

A THREE-day charity event is raising funds for the treatment of a five-year-old girl with cerebral palsy.

The Leah's Wish campaign has been set up to raise £35,000 for Leah Davy from Rowley Regis, who she is unable to walk due to spastic diplegia.

The three-day event is at The Royal Harji Bhaji, Dudley Road, Rowley Regis, from tomorrow (Friday) to Sunday, including a darts competition and karaoke.

Police boss wants clarity after mixed messages over funding

Firefighters in raccoons rescue mission



Nuna, one of the raccoons, with owner Hannah Nott after being rescued from a fire in an Oldbury garden

A PAIR of pet raccoons had a lucky escape after a fire broke out in a garden shed next to their cage, where they were found to be ‘clinging on for dear life’.

Nuna and Buddha desperately tried to escape their cage after flames took hold of Iris Nott's shed in the back garden of her Oldbury home. The creatures belong to her daughter Hannah Nott, 32, who is in the process of setting up her own animal charity.

Crew commander Chris Green said: “They were clinging on for dear life. The raccoons were right on the far side away from the fire and we used a big fan to blow the smoke away from them. Hannah Nott said: “The raccoons are my life and I'm just so overjoyed that they're OK. We didn't expect them to come out alive. I was beside myself seeing them clinging onto the cage but luckily fire crews helped me get them out.”

The raccoons were taken to Manor Vets on Kent Road, Halesowen, and were given a clean bill of health.

The cause of the fire, which happened at around 6pm on Wednesday, November 25, is believed to have been caused by a tumble dryer in the shed.

Mrs Nott, aged 68, who lives with her daughter, said: “The fire service were unbelievably quick to the house. If it wasn't for that I don't think the raccoons would have made it.”

THE Chancellor's pledge to protect police budgets has been challenged by the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner after Theresa May told chiefs that funding would fall in real terms.

George Osborne announced in his Autumn Statement that there would be no decrease in police funding, a move which shocked many senior police figures who had expected cuts of up to 25 per cent.

But a letter sent by the Home Secretary to chief constables following the Chancellor's statement says Government funding for policing – including funding for counter-terrorism – will fall by 1.3 per cent in real terms.

The letter has sparked serious concerns from West Midlands PCC David Jamieson, who says the region's force could lose up to £59 million if cash for new objectives was ‘top sliced’ from the total police budget.

Ms May's letter says police spending will be protected over the next four years ‘when local income is taken into account’, which she says is a rise of £900m over four years.

Shortfall

But it added: “Total central Government resource funding to policing, including funding for counter-terrorism, will be reduced by 1.3 per cent in real terms over four years.”

The letter said that PCCs would have to increase council tax to make up for the shortfall.

Mr Jamieson has written to the Home Secretary requesting clarity.

His letter says: “If I am correct and the amount of local police funding is in fact cut, some may portray the Chancellor's assertion that police funding has been protected as a deception.

“I challenge the Home Office to allay my fears on this crucial matter as soon as possible. I am in the process of planning my budget for next year and need clarity on this pressing matter.”

Jessica named as student of the year

A TRAINEE accountant who studied at Halesowen College has been awarded a prestigious Black Country accountancy prize and named student of the year.

Jessica Round, aged 21, from Brierley Hill, a former pupil of Pensnett High School, was awarded the John D Travers & Co Accountancy Student of the Year prize and presented with a commemorative trophy at an awards ceremony held at the college's Coombs Wood Business Centre.

The annual award by John Travers, founder of the Stourbridge-based insolvency and corporate recovery practice, is to encourage students to develop their technical accountancy skills at AAT Level 3, equivalent to A level.

Jessica worked at BIL Logistics in Halesowen, but has now landed a new job at The Binding Site, a specialist laboratory supplier, at the company's Birmingham head office.

Runners-up were Dan Cleary, Joe Phipps and Matthew Scrivens.

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IN MY VIEW

with Mark Andrews



Council's vision for theatre is revealed

EXCITING news for those of you who have been following the long-running story surrounding the Dudley Hippodrome. The council has now revealed its exciting new plans for the empty theatre.

Bright, sweeping, 'multi-functional' and gateway are among the surfeit of adjectives lavishly used to describe the new vision. And what is the new plan in question? Well you will be surprised to learn it involves another block-paving scheme.

What is it with councils and block-paving? Dudley has done pretty well with these fabled slabs in recent years. There has been the scheme in the market place, the 'civic square' in Stone Street, and the 'open-air theatre' in Coronation Gardens.

Then there's the scheme in Wolverhampton, where the council boasted it would increase 'footfall' – local authority speak for visitors – when all it seems to have done so far is caused traffic problems around the bus station and closed one of the city's oldest and nicest shops.

Look, I've got nothing against a bit of block-paving. Usually, it looks quite nice. But as a regeneration tool it is next to useless. Nobody ever comes into town to admire the floor surface.

And back to the Hippodrome. Now, I'm a realist, I know there's no magic money tree, and I don't expect the council to pour in millions of pounds. And if, in the six years since the council bought the theatre for £500,000 it had come up with an exciting scheme for the site, be it a new theatre, a museum or tourist attraction, then I would be all for it.

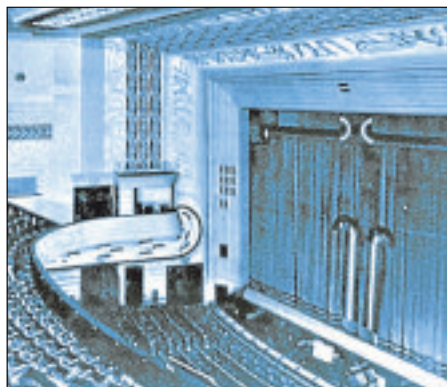
But having spent half a million on buying the theatre, the best ideas it has come up with have been a temporary car park, a conference centre and now an Alan Titchmarsh Ground Force project.

Could you imagine a private business spending this sort of money on a landmark building, not knowing what to do with it, and then knocking it down and paving over it?

The council hasn't revealed the cost of the 'bright, sweeping, multi-functional open space', but I would be surprised if it didn't run into seven figures. The market scheme cost £6.75 million, and of course there are the demolition costs, and the cost of maintaining all the shrubbery in the scheme. Money which would be better spent keeping the museum and art gallery open.

So here's a solution. The council bought the site at auction, why not do what any property developer with an abortive project would do, and stick it back in the auction? It might not get its £500,000 back, but sometimes you have to cut your losses. Let someone else have a go.

Could a private company make a go of the theatre? What else could it use the site for? I've no idea. But I bet if it was the developer's own money, it would not involve topiary and block-paving.



The interior of the Dudley Hippodrome taken 1957



The boarded up Hippodrome building in Castle Hill, Dudley



Bob Hope, right, at the Hippodrome in 1957

Final curtain set to fall on Hippodrome

Dudley's historic theatre is being lined up to become a public open space. **RICHARD GUTTRIDGE** reports

FROM Laurel and Hardy to Bob Hope and Ken Dodd – some of the biggest stars of entertainment that graced the Dudley Hippodrome stage.

This was at a time when the town had a theatre to contend with some of the best in the country.

But, after years of neglect, which has seen the once-famous venue continue to decline, the final curtain is about to fall.

Over the last few years it was hoped the historic building would make a return as a theatre as passionate campaign groups entered into discussions about rescuing the venue.

However, it now appears the long-running battle to provide the town with a theatre it can be proud of once again has been brought to an abrupt end as plans have emerged to pull it down and replace it with an open public space.

Scrapped

There was talk of a Dudley holy trinity of the Hippodrome, zoo and Black Country Living Museum being formed to boost tourism in the town.

The former theatre had been under threat of demolition for years since the council tabled plans to bulldoze the venue to make way for a temporary car park.

Plans were then revealed by Dudley Zoo to build a multi-million pound visitor centre on the site of the Hippodrome before being scrapped last year when it was revealed the facility would instead be built within the zoo grounds.

The battle to save the Hippodrome then gathered pace before being dealt a major blow earlier this year when Wolverhampton-based entertainment company The Rok Group pulled out of a proposed rescue deal.

As recently as last month, bullish leaders



The public space replacing the Hippodrome would open up views of the town's castle

of the Friends of Dudley Hippodrome group declared they could have the venue up and running again by next year. If that sounded optimistic at the time those aspirations have now been all but snuffed out as council bosses have revealed plans to demolish the building – and replace it with public open space.

The scheme has certainly come out of the blue, with interested parties having been given a guided tour of the building just a few weeks ago, leaving heritage and community groups in Dudley baffled.

Council bosses insist their plan will see the removal of a 'dilapidated' building and a 'modern public exhibition and events open space' put in its place. But the plan has already attracted fierce criticism.

West Midlands MEP and Ukip councillor Bill Etheridge said: "The Labour controlling group seem intent in wiping out our heritage

as shown by the potential closure of Dudley Museum and Art Gallery and now the people's hippodrome is on their hit list. Shame on them."

Fellow Ukip councillor Roger Scott-Dow said Dudley would be losing its 'jewel in the crown'.

He said: "The council should have worked far closer with the Friends group and other interested parties. A revitalised Hippodrome could act as a further much-needed catalyst for further regeneration."

Black Country Gaz Sawyers, co-founder of the Black Country Festival, said the proposals to bulldoze the Hippodrome had left him 'dismayed'.

"I don't understand why the council would want to destroy something and put nothing in its place, just a piece of huge open land," he said.

"It's come out of the blue and will come as a shock to a lot of people. If I had any power in what was put there, I'd want to see something that represented the musical heritage of Dudley, which used to be a thriving place for concerts and music shows."

"It's devastating to just destroy this historical building, it makes no sense at all."

Just a few months ago, comedy great Ken Dodd joined campaigners in calling for the hippodrome to be saved.

However, Councillor Patrick Harley, leader of the opposition Conservative group in Dudley, said he could understand the council's thinking. He said: "I think it's regrettable by the council that the news has broken in this manner and been dripped out to the public, but as far as I'm aware the controlling group of the Hippodrome have been left with no choice but to demolish it."

Regeneration boss Councillor Khurshid Ahmed said: "We've given people every opportunity to make sure we can keep the Hippodrome. Unfortunately it needs £5m to £10m to bring it back into use and that's a long shot. It's not just a gateway to Dudley town – it's a gateway to the borough. It's an important area and it could look amazing for the town and borough."

"Hopefully the people of Dudley will see the reasoning behind why we've had to make this decision."

Glory

While council chiefs have come under fire over the plans, they are right about one thing – the building is in a dilapidated state. The dormant, run-down building that currently stands on Castle Hill is a far cry from the glory years when the great and the good of showbiz would regularly top the bill in Dudley.

Built shortly after the end of the Second World War in 1938 on the site of the Dudley Opera House, which had been destroyed by fire the previous year, the theatre became a popular variety theatre until 1964. In the intervening years the likes of Judy Garland and George Formby appeared there along with rising stars such as Bruce Forsyth, while in 1947 legendary comedy double act Laurel and Hardy performed. It was later run as a bingo hall by Gala Bingo, closing in 2009.

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Let's get Midlands engine revving

THE announcement that the West Midlands Combined Authority will have devolved power to control its own affairs, and a metro-mayor is good news indeed. Quite apart from the extra £1bn from the Government for investment, transport projects and training, it means people in our part of the West Midlands will have a more direct say about how their own money is spent.

I congratulate Bob Sleigh, who chairs the Shadow Board of the West Midlands Combined Authority and all the metropolitan

councils and the LEPs for moving so swiftly to create a partnership and secure this deal with the government. This kind of streamlined devolution is just what we need – more direct control over policy without an extra layer of bureaucracy and cost. The agreement will mean more money, more autonomy and more opportunity for our region. Let's get the Midland engine really revving.

ANTHEA MCINTYRE
Conservative MEP for West Midlands

Bag charge could help shoplifters

I DON'T know how successful the idea of charging people for bags is at 'saving the planet' but just sat here watching the usual adverts on TV for perfume and the like and it's just struck me. You go into a large shop, buy whatever it is you fancy, put it into your pocket (as men do) then as you are walking out you are asked if you have paid for all your purchases?

How long will it be before someone is wrongly accused?

Or will this idea of charging for bags become, what could be called, a thieves charter?

I won't go into the details but if I've worked it out I'm sure shoplifters already have!

M GOUGH
Wombourne

Prayer ban pandering to bigots

WE have been exhorted over the past decades not to cause offence to others.

Not causing offence has been used as the reason why all manner of things have been either banned or scaled down, but the decision by Digital Cinema Media (DCM) to ban a short advertisement featuring The Lord's Prayer has caused a large number of people to pause for thought.

The DCM are at liberty to lay down their own rules and not accepting religious material is a matter for them. However, I wonder whether they have really thought through their published reasons for refusing the advertisement?

DCM has stated they turned down the advertisement because they felt it might, or could, offend followers of other faiths or of none. In my understanding of that, DCM is saying they don't want to offend the intolerant – who else would object to the advertisement?

Is backing down to bigots really what we want?

GORDON SMITH
Dudley

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST

Dudley Chronicle,
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Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

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expressandstar.co.uk

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

Cynics are eroding society's foundations

THERE is a romance running through your pages (Nov 26).

It is the romance that voluntarism can replace government provision, eg libraries. Another part of this romance ran through George Osborne's spending statement and it runs through the 'Metro Mayor' idea for the West – an idea rejected when it was put to the vote in Birmingham.

Yet another part of the romance is UKIP's appeal characterised by their latest reference to Enoch Powell. That speech dates to 1966, it's pre-Thatcher, we still had a manufacturing industry in those days. Ukipers are romantics for a long-gone past.

Your columns do allow re-

ality to intrude in the shape of 48,000 food parcels and hospital staff not wanting their loved ones to be admitted to where they work. It is a shocking dissonance.

One of the new Labour leadership's economic advisers has just written an article (Guardian, Nov 25) about the necessary strategic role of the state. Mariana Mazzucato has accused Osborne of 'eroding the foundations'. The Tories, of course, are too cynical to accept such an assessment.

But the consequences of this cynicism are all around us, and certainly not least in Dudley.

JOHN PAYNE
Dudley Green Party
Halesowen

Call to check on headlights

HOW come in the last few years there are so many cars on the road with only one headlight working?

They look like motorbikes from a distance and now the dark nights and mornings are upon us they are a hazard.

We have competitions counting how many we can see on our trips out. The total was 32 on the way back from Wolves one night. Last week 21 and two with no lights at all between Lye and Halesowen.

Come on motorists, check your lamps, you must know.

H WISE
Dudley

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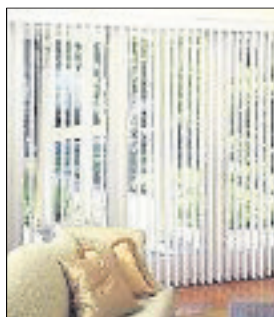
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Get rocking around on a Christmas spree

THE COUNTDOWN to Christmas features festive treats for music fans in Birmingham and the Black Country.

First up, tonight (Thu) The Courteeners continue their rise with a gig in Wolverhampton that's been upgraded from the Wulfrun to the Civic Hall due to public demand for tickets.

The band, who recently put out an expanded edition of their 2014 top three album Concrete Love (subtitled Extra Love), will be playing the Civic as part of a sold out UK tour.

The group from Middleton, between Rochdale and Manchester, are crowning their most successful year to date with a new Christmas song, the soaring seasonal Winter Wonderland by frontman Liam Fray. Profits from sales of the track will be donated to help the homeless via charity Shelter.

Fans of hard-hitting dance music will be flocking to the Barclaycard Arena in Birmingham city centre tonight for the return of The Prodigy, who achieved their sixth consecutive chart-topping album with The Day Is My Enemy this year. Don't be late, because support comes from the mighty Public Enemy.

Birmingham's Duran Duran are back with a new album, Paper Gods, but expect Rio and other old favourites when Simon Le Bon and co play the Genting Arena at the NEC tomorrow night (Fri). Veteran rock fans will be out in force for Status Quo at the Barclaycard Arena on Saturday with their Accept No Substitute UK winter tour. Support comes from R&B guitarist great and remarkable survivor Wilko Johnson.

Relish a rock band at the peak of their powers when Stereophonics let rip with C'est La Vie, I Wanna Get Lost With You and other tracks from their recent Keeping The Village Alive and 2013's hugely successful Graffiti On The Train albums at the Genting



The Courteeners comes to Wolverhampton Civic as part of a sold out UK tour



Welsh rockers Stereophonics have a December 11 gig at the Genting Arena

Arena on December 11. The Welsh outfit fronted by Kelly Jones have a reputation as one of the best live bands on the music scene with their no-nonsense raw rock approach.

Monsters of rock Def Leppard and Whitesnake join forces at the Genting on December 12 and then the smooth soul sounds of Simply Red will be heard at the Genting on December 13 and 15, with support from Natalie Imbruglia. Then it's time for a megastar when Madonna hits town on December 16 to play the Barclaycard Arena as part of her Rebel Heart Tour.

One of the best party atmospheres is likely to be at Wolverhampton Civic Hall on December 19 when Stourbridge indie band Ned's Atomic Dustbin have organised the inaugural Kill Your Television Festival, and will treat fans to the band's first new song for 21 years, in anticipation of the gig.

The Neds have performed numerous sell-out shows at the venue in recent years. Tickets for the gig, which will also feature The Wedding Present, The Primitives and Eat, plus a return for legendary indie club night Blast Off, are still on sale.

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Members of £35m money laundering gang jailed

SIXTEEN members of a £35 million drugs money laundering racket have been jailed for a combined 73 years.

Crime syndicates across the country laundered their narcotics cash through the network headed by Harpal Singh Gill of Smethwick.

Gill, aged 67, of Wall Close, set up a number of bogus clothing and textile companies to disguise the operation. False invoices helped the network launder more than £35m between May 2007 and May 2013, the National Crime Agency revealed.

His son, Manjit Gill, aged 40, from George Road, Edgbaston, a singer who is also known as Foji Gill, took on the role of director for a number of the companies, receiving significant amounts of money.

Gill and his son were sentenced for money laundering offences in March this year after being found guilty at Birmingham Crown Court, receiving 11 years and five years in prison respectively. The full scale of the enterprise was revealed last week after the last four members of the network were sentenced.



Mastermind of the network Harpal Singh Gill used his status to influence others took advantage of the respect afforded to him."

Bogus

Shafak Mohammed, 45, of Russells Hall Road, Dudley, who headed a bogus company and was found guilty of money laundering, was sentenced to 21 months in prison.

Sukhvinder Singh Dosanjh, 41, of Birmingham Road, Walsall, would meet couriers bringing money from other criminal gangs. He was sentenced to five and a half years in prison after being found guilty of money laundering.

Paul Risby, of the National Crime Agency, said: "Harpal Singh Gill used his position as head of his family and local businessman to influence family members and associates to be part of his criminal enterprise. He knowingly



Shafak Mohammed, 45, ran a bogus company to launder criminals' cash Birmingham, jailed for four years; Mohammed Pervez, 40, of Harvard Road, Solihull, sentenced to seven years in prison; Prakash Chauhan, 55, of Addison Road, Kings Heath, Birmingham, jailed for five and a half years; Ranjeev Singh Rai, 33, of Dovehouse Lane, Solihull, sentenced to three years and seven months in prison.

Also sentenced were James Coulson, 28, from Liverpool, jailed for 27 months and Andrew Wilson, 60, from Bedworth, Warwickshire was given a nine month suspended jail sentence. They both admitted possessing criminal property. Santokh Singh Sangha, 62, from Leicester was imprisoned for three years and Sarup Singh Parmar, 65, from Sparkhill was jailed for 29 months. They were both found guilty of money laundering.

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Car rescue pair receive chief's bravery awards



Rescuers — Samantha Holland and Sergeant Lewis Hurford-John with, centre, Chief Constable Chris Sims

A POLICE officer and a passer-by have received bravery awards for a rescue where a drunk driver was saved as her car teetered on the edge of a deep ditch.

Sergeant Lewis Hurford-John was first on the scene of the crash on Dudley's Bramford Estate when the Ford Focus careered off Park Road. The vehicle came to rest with its rear hanging over an embankment.

Sgt Lewis dragged a male passenger, thrown into a ditch under the perilously positioned car, to safety while

Samantha Holland leapt on the bonnet as a counter-balance to stop it plunging into the trench.

Samantha, 25, from Brierley Hill, who works at the Bramford Arms, was joined by pub customers to help weigh down the car before fire crews arrived to tow the vehicle to safety. The female driver would not have been able to keep the vehicle grounded on her own.

Sgt Hurford-John and Samantha were honoured for their bravery at an awards ceremony where they were respectively presented with a Chief Constable's Award and Good Citizen's Award from West Midlands Chief Constable Chris Sims. Sgt Hurford-John

said: "The car was literally rocking, ready to topple. We spotted a man in the ditch directly underneath the vehicle. He was clearly drunk and dazed so I ran down and dragged him out of the way. Samantha did a great job instinctively hopping on the bonnet to keep the front wheels on the ground."

Samantha added: "I sat on the bonnet for about 20 minutes before the fire brigade attached ropes to the car and dragged it away from the cut."

A 47-year-old woman from Bushbury later admitted drink driving in court was banned from driving for 20 months and told to pay £215 in fines and charges.

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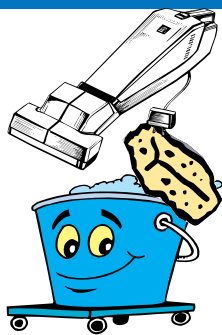
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Festive gifts from clubs get red card

CLOTHES pegs painted in West Brom's blue and white have topped a list of the worst Christmas presents being sold by Premier League clubs . . .

However when looking at other merchandise being sold at other Midland football clubs it is apparent the colourful pegs are in good company.

Family members scratching their heads over to what to get a Wolves fan can find a dinner bell with the club's crest on the handle, costing £6.

Villa supporters meanwhile can chomp on their club's official wine gums or fudge, both £1, while watching their team from the stands.

And how exactly would Walsall fans make sure they could see their favourite players in action without snapping up a £2 pair of binoculars?

Worst

Our clubs boast some weird and wonderful stocking fillers and gifts for Christmas.

Alan Cleverley, secretary of West Brom's supporters club, said: "I was actually bought a set of those clothes pegs by a mate.

"We always try and outdo each other by buying the worst presents possible.

"Having said that I do think there is some good stuff in the Albion shop and I particularly like buying their golf gloves because they are very good quality.



The infamous Baggies clothes pegs

"I also like buying the golf balls with the badges on – but I keep losing them.

"The standard over the last few years has really improved and for younger people there are all those mobile phone and computer accessories, so I bet they love them.

"I was actually out shopping with my granddaughter the other day and I was pointing out what they could buy me for Christmas. You can never have too many golf gloves because they can wear out quite quickly."

Another present is the Albion metal dog bowl for £7.99 along with diving duck with plug at £4.99.

For those wishing to buy a more serious gift, a WBA home goalkeeper shirt will set you back £54.99.

If Saddlers fans are not taken by the replica binoculars, perhaps a £1 pencil sharpener is more their cup of tea?

Adult training shower jackets cost £50.

Steve Davis, secretary of Walsall Football Supporters Trust, said: "I don't think there's anything too bad that really stands out in our club shop. But I have to say the onesies are just wrong – but then again I think they're all wrong. The worst thing I ever bought was



Winter warmer – Wolves jacket, £70



Ring the changes – dinner bell, £6



Getting it 'write' with a pencil case, £5

probably the mascot, Swift's, old costume online. I just thought it was a bit of a one-off but when it came through the post it was massive. I suppose the worse thing I could think of buying a Walsall fan for Christmas would be a Wolves half season ticket."

Wolves are selling force jackets in charcoal black for £70 but the bizarre dinner bell costs a mere £6. And, for those with a spare £1 in your pocket, a 30cm ruler is on offer. Aston Villa's worst offering – an astro turf sign cost-



All grown-up – an adult shirt, £54.99



Dog's dinner – metal food bowl, £7.99



Come clean with a diving duck plug, £4.99

ing £4 – should arguably have charted higher than eighth in the list of worse Christmas presents. The club, as well as selling its own range of confectionary, also stocks Aston Villa dog doorstops for £18.

For the more classy fan, a set of engraved Villa brandy glasses start at £50.

The list of tacky presents compiled by GambleGeek also included a £25 Bournemouth hard hat and Crystal Palace tape measures if they have a spare £4.99.



All-weather training – jacket, £50



Put football in focus – binoculars, £2



Make a point with a pencil sharpener, £1

Sunderland's dog lead emblazoned with the club's crest is on there, priced at £7.99, while a flashing yo-yo for Stoke City supporters also features.

Cockerel tinsel is available for Spurs fans costing £5 and Man City have thankfully produced a £10 garden thermometer.

Rounding off the top 20 worst buys are Swansea ladies' perfume at £15, Everton aftershave at £15 and a £40 Norwich City striped fleece onesie.

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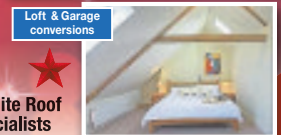
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Minion mania grips Merry Hill malls



Shoppers meet the Minions Kevin, Stuart and Bob at Intu Merry Hill on their Minion Mayhem tour to promote their new movie

MINION mayhem took over Merry Hill shopping centre, as part of a tour across the country to celebrate the release of their film.

In a sold-out show, hundreds of fans got the chance to meet Kevin, Stuart and Bob 'in person' and enjoy a photo opportunity, as well as winning prizes celebrating the re-

lease of Minions on Blu-Ray, Blu-Ray 3D and DVD. Everyone's favourite goggle-wearing yellow sidekicks caused a festive frenzy at the centre on Sunday.

From noon until 4pm some 500 people took part in meet and greets with the loveable animated characters that first appeared in the Despicable Me movies.

Homes plan for 'eyesore'

UP TO 180 jobs will be created under plans to build 60 homes on an 'eyesore' factory site on the edge of a Dudley nature reserve.

The scheme is earmarked for the former Kuehne and Nagel UK buildings in Netherton. The project would create around 180 construction jobs according to developer Persimmon Homes West Midlands.

Outline planning permission for the site at Saltwells Road has been granted by Dudley Council and it has now been sold to Persimmon Homes.

Persimmon has applied to the authority for reserved matters to build 62 homes with a decision due soon.

Ward councillor Jackie Cowell welcomed the move to redevelop an 'eyesore' site. She said: "This is a good thing as it's just been a fairly miserable location for quite some time.

We do need more development in the borough and desperately need more homes. This will bring new people into Dudley borough and jobs will be created as well."

The four-acre site is next to the Saltwells Nature Reserve, which covers 247 acres, and is an area of outstanding natural beauty. It also backs on to Mushroom Green conservation area.

Persimmon has applied to build two, three, four and five-bedroom homes.

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Tuesday 29th Dec: 9.00 - 2.00
Wednesday 30th Dec: 9.00 - 4.00
Thursday 31st Dec: 9.00 - 2.00
Friday 1st Jan: Closed
Normal opening times resume on
Saturday 2nd January

Love Your Local Market

Pan's 'Lost Boys' need sensible girls

REVIEW

by Leon Burakowski

Wendy & Peter Pan,
Royal Shakespeare Theatre,
Stratford-upon-Avon

GIRL power comes to Neverland in the Royal Shakespeare Company's gently feminist revamp of JM Barrie's magical story about the boy who never grows up.

But don't let the F word put you off — this production is very funny, full of magic, music and dance, it just makes it clear that 'lost boys' need sensible girls.

As the title suggests, in playwright Ella Hickson's reboot it is Wendy Darling who is the main character, trying to cope with an impetuous childish Pan who literally flies away from serious issues, like commitment. In the end she saves the day in alliance with Neverland's other girls, Tinkerbell and Tiger Lily.

First staged by the RSC two years ago, this spectacular production has been enhanced and returns sharper than before. But a running time of just under three hours, including interval, may challenge younger children.

It is very cleverly written with jokes pitched at both adult and younger audiences, including Shakespearean references along with various recent catchphrases and a couple of Barrie's most memorable lines.

This production benefits from the involvement of RSC associate actors such as the expressive Mariah Gale as a feisty Wendy and Darrel O'Silva as a melancholy, cynical and eloquent Captain Hook.

Comic support comes from the Lost Boys, including Lawrence Walker playing Tootles with a Black Country accent. Paul Kemp as Smee, Hook's devoted and clearly head-over-heels-



Rhys Rusbatch as Peter Pan with Mariah Gale as Wendy Photo by Manuel Harlan

in-love first mate, dreams of sharing a cosy cottage with his cap'n. But the biggest guffaws are prompted by Adam Gillen's shrieking cabin boy, a Neverland reworking of his awkward young hairdresser character in hit TV show Benidorm.

Shadows

Welsh actor Rhys Rusbatch seems relegated to a supporting role as Peter, but whether lofted about by his pack of shadows or leading the characters on wires through the air — the set does resemble a human mobile — he has charisma as a punky-looking Pan. Meanwhile, Charlotte Mills as Tinkerbell almost steals the show as a feisty Cockney fairy with a sharp tongue.

Don't underestimate this play's

emotional impact. It also has interesting things to say about bereavement. Keep a hanky handy for the scene when Wendy and her brothers are finally reunited with their own lost boy, a sibling who died.

The only caution I would offer parents of younger children is that Hook's murder of an insolent pirate and Arthur Kyeeyune's creepy contorted human crocodile may be a little too scary for some under-10s.

This production is much more substantial than the usual well-meaning but instantly forgettable festive fare in theatreland at this time of year — it makes you think as well as laugh. Wendy & Peter Pan continues in repertoire at Stratford until the end of January.

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Defiant — a group of Cradley Heath women chainmakers seen during the lock out in 1910



Women chainmakers of Cradley Heath on the march



Women's work — a workshop staffed by female chainmakers in Cradley Heath

Heritage project aims to preserve history of strike

THE proud history of the Black Country's female chainmakers is to feature in a new heritage project hoping to preserve the past before it is too late.

Pictures of artefacts and recordings made by the ancestors of chainmakers will be uploaded on a new website being set up by The Friends of the Women Chainmakers.

The group was formed to preserve the industrial heritage of the Black Country and celebrate the role that women played.

To kick start the project, the group is seeking ancestors of female chainmakers and of women who worked in other industries to share their family's story.

Chair Lesley Bates, said: "There are two sides to what we are doing with this project. One will look at the heritage side and involved speaking to the grandchildren and the great-grandchildren of the women chainmakers.

MEMORY LANE

By Rob Cox

"The other side will reflect on what women's work was like in the Black Country and Cradley Heath and whether it has changed at all in the last 100 years."

The 1910 Women Chainmakers' strike, led by Mary Macarthur and supported by the women of Cradley Heath, was pivotal in labour history and a significant step in the development of a universal minimum wage.

During a visit to Empire Theatre in Cradley Heath, union leader Macarthur saw poverty and was shocked by the infant mortality rate.

After she persuaded chainmaker bosses to set a minimum wage, she was left angry when they found a loophole that meant that the wage increase could be held back by nine months. This enabled them to stockpile chain and then lay off workers before the increase.

In response, Macarthur organised strikes

at chainmakers, the first being in Graingers Lane. The strike lasted 10 weeks until employers finally agreed to meet their demands.

Mrs Bates, added: "Mary Macarthur was very good at using the media. She made a film which went out to cinemas, including in the United States.

"This was really important stuff that resulted in the Workers' Institute at Cradley Heath, now at the Black Country Living Museum."

The group intend to apply for heritage lottery funding and will look to provide work packs for schools.

The motivation is to record accounts of the historic events for future generations.

Mrs Bates, added: "If we do not do something about it quickly there will not be people who have even second or third hand memories of the women chainmakers. The strike itself was such an important event but because this was a women's issue it does not tend to have the same prominence."

Contact Mrs Bates on 07816 480584.



Leader speaks — trade unionist and women's rights campaigner Mary Macarthur addresses the strikers

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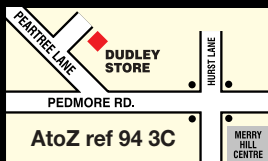
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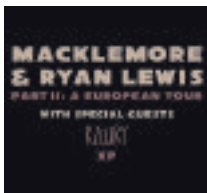
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Birmingham Repertory Theatre, B1 2EP. Call 0121 236 4455

Guys And Dolls
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New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, B5 4DS. Call 0844 871 3011

Jack And The Beanstalk
Mon - Thu at 10.30am, 1.30pm,
Palace Theatre, Redditch, B98 8AE. Call 01527 65203

White Christmas: South Staffs Musical Theatre Company
Fri at 7.30pm, Sat at 2.30pm, 7.30pm, £10 - £19.50
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, WV1 1DE. Call 01902 573320

Dynamo
Wed at 8pm, Thu at 8pm, £33.20 - £99.70
Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham, B1 2AA. Call 0121 780 4141

COMEDY

Ed Byrne: Outside Looking In
Wed at 8pm, £19 - £21
Lichfield Garrick, WS13 6HR. Call 01543 412121

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Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, ST16 2LT. Call 01785 254653

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Fri at 10.30am,
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Check out full listings in **the ticket** in Friday's Express & Star

Dream of a Grand White Christmas

WITH weather forecasts threatening the white stuff and yuletide fast approaching, festive favourite, **White Christmas**, staged by South Staffs Musical Theatre Company, has arrived at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre.

The musical opened this week and continues through to Saturday with nightly performances at 7.30pm, plus a 2.30pm matinee on Saturday.

Irving Berlin's classic Christmas offering, which became a 1954 movie starring Bing Crosby, Danny Kaye, Rosemary Clooney and Vera Allen, is a relatively new stage adaptation for amateur performance.

The score includes a host of well-known songs including Count Your Blessings, Let Yourself Go, Happy Holidays, Blue Skies, I Love A Piano and, of course, the title song.

Simon McGee from Lower Gornal is playing Bing Crosby's character, Bob Wallace. "It was a fantastic feeling when I found out I had got the part of Bob Wallace in *White Christmas*," says Simon. "I mean, to play the male lead in this wonderful show at Christmas is the icing on the cake in a very special year for me."

"It has been an amazing experience, but very challenging, especially the dancing. I think I have lost a stone in weight during the gruelling regime that our choreographer, Maria Shee has put us through."

"I love playing opposite Lexie Bennett who plays Betty Hayes, Rebecca Haydon who plays her sister, Judy, and my cheeky chappy partner in



Rebecca Haydon and Lexie Bennett star in *White Christmas* at the Grand Theatre

crime, Luke Renwick who plays my sidekick, Phil Davis. We have had such a good giggle during rehearsals."

Lexie Bennett plays Bob's reluctant love interest, Betty Hayes, with Rebecca Haydon as her sister Judy. The girls have had great fun with their roles and in particular have enjoyed

singing the classic duet Sisters complete with huge feather fans.

With tap dancing, superb score, heart-warming storyline, snow falling on stage and on the audience, and a huge Christmas tree, who could ask for more? Call 01902 429212 or visit www.grandtheatre.co.uk



Family life inspires Ed

MOCK the Week star Ed Byrne is an established touring favourite, and despite his youthful looks the Irishman recently marked up 20 years as a comic.

His latest show of observational comedy, *Outside, Looking In*, is at the Wulfrun Hall in Wolverhampton next Thursday (December 10) before the tour returns to the West Midlands at Birmingham Town Hall on February 19.

The new show covers a wide range of subjects – from a gastric illness to UKIP – but he talks a lot about his family. It's his most personal yet.

"I didn't make a conscious effort to write a more personal show, but that was what was coming out when I started writing it," Ed says.

"People come to see me for a laugh and I would like to think they go away thinking the show is quite heartwarming. A lot of comics may talk about the same stuff, but what makes it mine is that what I'm saying is what I genuinely think on this subject, and I try to make it as funny as I can. I think we all mine our lives to some degree or other."

Ed is adamant that he will keep his two young sons out of the celebrity spotlight, but in *Outside, Looking In*, he shows a picture of one of his sons – the denouement of a bittersweet story about buying new shoes – which not only illustrates it perfectly, but produces an "Aaaaah" moment.

"I'm aware that they haven't given me permission to talk about them and that there will come a point when I can't," Ed says. "I talk about them in pretty abstract terms, because what I'm discussing is the act of parenting, and you can't talk about that without mentioning your own children."

Music and laughter will rock the Robin

JAZZ and funk fans will be heading for Bilston's Robin 2 venue on Sunday for a rare Midlands appearance by American vibes player Roy Ayers and his Band. On stage at 8.30, Ayers has had R&B hits and been an inspiration to both acid jazz and hip-hop scenes.

Other tasty gigs at the Mount Pleasant venue include The Jam's bassist Bruce Foxton in the From The Jam Sound Affects Show tomorrow (Fri). Metal legends Tygers of Pan Tang on Monday, and the comedy genius of Neil Innes with his Beatles parody *The Rutles* on Tuesday. Wednesday sees the return of Worcestershire rock 'n' roller Mike Sanchez & The Portions.

Dynamo bringing his first live tour

TV magician Dynamo is bringing his *Seeing Is Believing* show to Birmingham Barclaycard Arena for five consecutive nights from Wednesday. He has added an extra performance at 2.30pm on December 12.

The hip street magician from Bradford, real name Steven Frayne, has amazed viewers with stunts that have included walking on water on the Thames and levitating above London skyscraper The Shard.

Dynamo says: "I am hoping that like I did for magic on TV, I can reinvent the live magic show and produce something fans have never seen before." Tickets start from £37.25.

Guy decides to get busier at 40

TAKING a break from his day job as the frontman of Ramsbottom's finest alternative rock quartet Elbow, Guy Garvey will be at the O2 Academy Birmingham tonight (Thu), touring in support of his debut solo effort, the critically-acclaimed *Court-ting The Squall*.

Why a solo album? He says: "I'm pretty sure it was the 40 thing. Around 40, I thought, I'm officially a middle-aged man. I should do more work. There should be more output than 10 songs every two years. I flung myself at it. There's a vastness to Elbow records, in places, almost a regal thing. This record is more rough and ready."

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Discerning and well-Red

With a bounty of exotic dishes to choose from, **MARK SHIPP** found India Red restaurant was the hottest ticket in town

"WE know there's competition, but if everyone knows their palate and knows their own food, they will tell the difference."

So says Zub Ahmed, proprietor of the India Red Restaurant in Hednesford. Having been there for 12 years, Zub and his restaurant have become established fixtures.

But, with a cluster of Indian restaurants within such a short distance, he knows he has to stay ahead of the game to keep his regular customers happy.

With that in mind, the menu is changed on a regular basis to offer new dishes, while the chef is known for either creating new lines or putting his own stamp on traditional ones.

And, it's fair to say that the 110-seat restaurant is doing very nicely for itself, thank you.

Ushered

It was a busy night in the Market Street premises when my partner and I ventured out. We had to wait a while for our meals, but that was no problem. The best things come those who wait, they say, and I always believe that quick service does not always represent the best quality. On this occasion, the food really was worth the wait. And there was enough left over for a mini-feast the following day.

Seating downstairs at India Red is provided for couples or small parties, while upstairs tends to cater for the larger groups. As it is open plan, however, my better half did comment on how noisy it might be.

Decor-wise India Red is tastefully done, with background music that one tends not to notice as it does little to drown out the general hub-bub from the diners.



The outside view of India Red restaurant, which can be found at 44, Market Street, Hednesford



The tasteful decor on show with seating available for over 100

Minor quibbles aside, the food is the main attraction. The poppadoms were moreish, but served only to whet the appetite for what was to come. We were asked to try out a range of starters, and other menu items we had not ordered found their way to our table. Generous, and obviously done to impress.

But while appreciated, it was also unnecessary as we felt suitably plished. And we'd already been impressed by the fare.

Zub explained that his Bangladeshi chef

had served eight years at India Red, but was always looking to improve on standards. He even took the time, despite the hectic evening, to explain some of the methods and ingredients behind some of the dishes.

Take the malai kofta, for example, meatballs in a sweet and spicy cheese sauce. It contains yoghurt and honey to give it that sweetness, and perfectly offset the Amritsar chicken, with its hidden kick due to garam masala and panch puran mix.

That was just a taster. The menu comprises traditional dishes and India Red specials, but the beauty is that each dish is colour-coordinated according to the heat factor, from a sweet and creamy grey to a red vindaloo hot.

My other half didn't need to worry about her tried and trusted makhani chicken, while I stepped into the unknown for the salmon surprise, the twist being that it actually wasn't a curry – and it came with chicken, in tiny pieces, added to a bed of mashed potatoes.

Not what I was expecting. Good, though, but without a curry it was dry, so the beef haleem – a newcomer to the menu – was a welcome accompaniment. And what a curry that was. It was mild, but had a tangy taste, emanating from its mix of spices, sugar and vinegar. Worth a visit for that alone.

India Red is open Sunday to Thursday from 5.30 to 11.30pm and until 1am on Friday and Saturday. It is currently taking bookings for Christmas. Call 01543 424769 or 426611.

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CHOICE



Declan Donnelly

I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here! (ITV, 9pm)
Ant and Dec present the final of the 15th series, as the last famous faces left in the camp face the last challenges in the Australian jungle. Viewers' votes will decide who has been this year's favourite contestant, and when the results are in, this year's king or queen of the jungle will be crowned, before the last handful of contestants return home. The presenters will be catching up with the contestants later in the week for a special follow-up show as they return to normal life after the hardships of the Bush. Last in the series.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **7.25** Match of the Day. (R) **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** Fern Britton Meets Linford Christie. **11.00** Regional Programme. **12.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Escape to the Country. **1.45** FA Cup Final Score. **4.15** Songs of Praise. **4.50** The Hunt. (R) **5.50** BBC News.
6.10 **Regional Programme.**
6.20 **Countryfile.** Ellie Harrison and Joe Crowley take a tour of some of Scotland's most remote scenic areas, visiting Britain's highest road, which runs 2,000 feet above sea level, meeting a couple who have made a new life as crofters, and discovering a fish that could solve all the salmon industry's problems. Plus, Tom Heap reports on the rising number of traffic accidents on rural roads and Adam Henson examines how straw may be the key to the UK's future energy production. Including Weather For The Week Ahead.
7.20 **Strictly Come Dancing: The Results.** Tess Daly and Claudia Winkelman reveal the results of last night's musicals themed episode and another couple is eliminated.
8.00 **Antiques Roadshow.** Fiona Bruce presents the show from the Queen's private residence at Balmoral, where items brought in to be valued include a ceramic pot made by Pablo Picasso.
9.00 **The Hunt.** How predators hunt in coastal waters, where everything is in constant motion and opportunities have to be taken quickly. Featuring dolphins, octopuses and fishing wolves.
10.00 **BBC News.**
10.20 **Regional Programme.**
10.30 **Match of the Day 2.** Mark Chapman reviews the day's Premier League action between Newcastle United and Liverpool at St James' Park, as the Magpies looked for a win to move them up the table.
11.20 **Citizen Khan.** Amjad's mother threatens to solve her son and Shazia's housing problems by taking them with her to live in Bradford, while Mr Khan becomes convinced his grandson is psychic. (R)
11.50 **The Graham Norton Show.** (R)
12.35 Weather for the Week Ahead.
12.40 BBC News.

BBC2

6.15 The A to Z of TV Gardening. (R) **7.00** Big Dreams Small Spaces. (R) **8.00** Countryfile. (R) **9.00** An Island Parish: Falklands. (R) **9.30** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.00** Len and Ainsley's Big Food Adventure. (R) **11.45** Terry and Mason's Great Food Trip. (R) **12.15** MOTD2 Extra. **1.00** Live Snooker: UK Championship. Coverage of the opening session of the final from York.
6.00 **Match of the Day: FA Cup Highlights.** Action from the weekend's second-round matches, as the remaining sides from League One, League Two and non-league football looked to make it to round three and potentially lucrative games against Premier League or Championship opposition. Standout ties in this round included Hartlepool United's trip to Salford City – part-owned by former Manchester United stars Gary and Phil Neville, Paul Scholes, Ryan Giggs and Nicky Butt. Elsewhere, 2008 winners Portsmouth met Accrington Stanley, and Rochdale played Bury in an all-League-One affair.
7.00 **Live Snooker: UK Championship.** Hazel Irvine presents coverage of the concluding session of the final from the Barbican Centre in York, as the tournament widely regarded as the second-most prestigious on the calendar comes to an end. Ronnie O'Sullivan won the title last year but is not taking part this time around, having been advised by doctors not to compete on the professional tour until the debilitating insomnia he has been suffering from improves. With a commentary team including Dennis Taylor, Stephen Hendry and Steve Davis. Subsequent programmes are subject to change.
11.00 **Film: Brooklyn's Finest.** (2009) Three Brooklyn police officers face contrasting personal dilemmas as their careers converge at a single moment. Crime thriller, starring Richard Gere.
1.05 Sign Zone: Countryfile. Artist Matt Sewell shows Ellie Harrison how he captures the character of birds, and John Craven visits a seed bank in Shropshire that is trying to preserve endangered trees. (R) **2.00** Holly City. Arthur and Morven struggle to rekindle their friendship after clashing over patient care, while Dom is distracted by a patient that he has fallen for. (R) **3.00** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Fort Boyard Ultimate Challenge. **6.25** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.30** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.50** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **7.00** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.05** Oddbods. (R) **7.10** Sooty. (R) **7.25** Super 4. (R) **7.40** Matt Hatter Chronicles. **8.00** Marvel Avengers Assemble. **8.30** Fish Hooks. **8.45** Fish Hooks. **9.00** Jessie. **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **10.25** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **11.30** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **12.35** ITV News; Weather. **12.45** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **1.50** The Chase. (R) **2.55** The X Factor. (R) **4.30** Film: The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor. (2008) Fantasy adventure sequel, starring Brendan Fraser.
6.30 **Regional Programme;** Weather. **6.45** **ITV News;** Weather.
7.00 **Jeikyll and Hyde.** Part one of two. Robert struggles to control his transformations, and joins forces with a vigilante to investigate a series of strange killings in exchange for Kavi's freedom.
8.00 **The X Factor.** Caroline Flack and Olly Murs present the results of the weekend's viewers' vote, deciding which acts will be eliminated and who will be performing in next week's final.
9.00 **I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here!** Ant and Dec present the final of the 15th series, as the last famous faces left in the camp face the last challenges in the Australian jungle. Viewers' votes will decide who has been this year's favourite contestant, and when the results are in, this year's king or queen of the jungle will be crowned, before the last handful of contestants return home. The presenters will be catching up with the contestants later in the week for a special follow-up show as they return to normal life after the hardships of the Bush. Last in the series.
10.35 **ITV News;** Weather.
10.50 **Premiership Rugby Union.** Action from the latest round of fixtures in England's top flight, including Worcester Warriors v Leicester Tigers, Harlequins v London Irish and Wasps v Exeter Chiefs.
11.50 **Off Their Rockers.** The hidden-camera show continues. (R)
12.15 Jackpot247. **3.00** Motorsport UK. **3.50** ITV Nightscreen. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)

SUNDAY'S TV DECEMBER 6

CHANNEL 4

6.10 The King of Queens. (R) **6.35** Challenge Mallorca. **7.05** World Superbike Review of the Year. **7.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.00** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.45** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **1.10** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **1.40** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **2.10** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **2.35** The Simpsons. (R) **3.05** The Simpsons. (R) **3.35** Film: Journey to the Center of the Earth. (2008) Fantasy adventure, starring Brendan Fraser. **5.25** Film: The Jungle Book. (1967) Premiere. A boy raised by animals finds his life threatened when a tiger returns to his jungle home. Disney animated adventure, with the voices of Phil Harris and George Sanders.
7.00 **Channel 4 News.**
7.30 **World's Weirdest Homes.** Charlie Luxton presents a guide to 20 of the most unusual residences ever built, before revealing what he considers the weirdest house on Earth. Residences featured include a ship that provides living space for an artist, a rotating house, a plane in the middle of a forest, a converted nuclear missile silo, a perfect replica of the family home from The Munsters, a summerhouse by a frequently flooding river and an apartment block that looks like a giant snake.
9.00 **Homeland.** The CIA agents put their plans into action, but the German foreign intelligence agency BND also has an operation of their own that is about to be completed. Thriller following a team of CIA agents, starring Claire Danes.
10.05 **Gogglebox.** Capturing the households' instant reactions to what they are watching on TV from the comfort of their own sofas. (R)
11.05 **Film: The Five-Year Engagement.** (2012) A couple decide to get married, but unexpected changes in their lives keep them from making it to the altar. Romantic comedy, starring Jason Segel, Emily Blunt and Rhys Ifans.
1.15 Alan Carr: Chatty Man. This Morning hosts Phillip Schofield and Holly Willoughby join the comedian for his entertainment chat show, packed with sketches, topical discussion and audience participation. (R) **2.10** Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners. (R) **3.00** Four in a Bed. (R) **5.05** Location, Location, Location. House-hunting in Liverpool. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Peppa Pig. **6.05** Bananas in Pyjamas. (R) **6.15** Bob the Builder. (R) **6.30** Ticky Toc. (R) **6.40** Zack and Quack. (R) **6.50** Make Way for Noddy. (R) **7.05** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.20** Little Princess. (R) **7.30** Pig Ahoy! (R) **7.50** Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) **8.15** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **8.30** Wanda and the Alien. (R) **8.45** Toby's Travelling Circus. (R) **8.55** Jelly Jamm. (R) **9.10** LazyTown. (R) **9.40** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.15** Football League Tonight. (R) **11.40** The Gadget Show. (R) **12.45** Film: Christmas Mix. (2014) Premiere. Romantic comedy, starring Haylie Duff. **2.30** Film: Call Me Claus. (2001) Christmas family drama, starring Whoopi Goldberg. **4.20** Film: Santa Who? (2000) Santa Claus crashes his sleigh and loses his memory. A youngster tries to help him beat the amnesia in time for Christmas. Family comedy, starring Leslie Nielsen.
6.10 **Film: Bruce Almighty.** (2003) God tires of a down-on-his-luck reporter's constant complaining, so passes on His powers to give him a taste of ultimate responsibility. The newsman falls in love with his extraordinary abilities – but a never-ending stream of incoming prayers and his ambitious attempt to please everyone soon prove there is more to the job than meets the eye. Comedy, starring Jim Carrey. Jennifer Aniston and Morgan Freeman.
8.10 **Film: Bulletproof Monk.** (2003) A mysterious Tibetan monk is entrusted with protecting an ancient and mystical scroll. As modern-day Nazis seek out the relic in a bid to resurrect the Third Reich, the monk searches for a suitable successor to take over his task – and a pickpocket is the unlikely choice. Martial arts thriller, starring Chow Yun-Fat, Seann William Scott, Jaime King, Victoria Smurft and Karel Roden. Edited for violence.
9.55 **5 News Weekend.**
10.00 **Film: Django Unchained.** (2012) Premiere. An escaped slave becomes a bounty hunter and fights to rescue his wife from a sadistic plantation owner. Quentin Tarantino's Western, with Jamie Foxx and Christoph Waltz.
1.15 SuperCasino. **3.10** Ultimate Police Interceptors. (R) **4.00** House Doctor. (R) **4.25** Make It Big. (R) **5.45** Angels of Jarm. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three
9.00 Don't Tell the Bride **8.00** Top Gear **7.00** Russell Howard's Good News **9.30** Film: 8 Mile (2002) **11.15** Family Guy **12.00** American Dad! **12.25** Family Guy **12.45** Josh **1.15** People Just Do Nothing **3.15** Josh **3.45** Sunny D **4.00** Close
BBC Four
7.00 Concerto at the BBC Proms **7.25** Film: Pina: Legend of Dance (2011) **9.00** The Golden Age of Steam Railways **10.00** Film: Easy Money (2010) **12.00** Britain's Natural World: The Unnatural History of London **1.00** Britain's Deadliest Rail Disaster: Quintinshill **2.00** Horizon: Are We Alone in the Universe? **2.50** Natural World: Polar Bears and Grizzlies – Bears on Top of the World **3.40** Close
ITV2
11.00 The X Factor **12.35** I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here! **1.35** You've Been Framed Christmas! **2.55** Elf: Buddy's Musical Christmas **3.35** Film: The Polar Express (2004) **5.35** I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here! **6.40** Film: Back to the Future Part III (1990) **8.00** The Xtra Factor **10.00** You've Been Framed At Christmas! **10.35** I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here Now! **11.35** Films **12.35** Film: The Faculty (1998) **2.30** Teleshopping
ITV3
12.50 Film: Columbo: Now You See Him (1976) **2.50** Rosemary & Thyme **3.50** Wycliffe **4.55** Agatha Christie's Marple **7.00** Sunday Night at the Palladium **8.00** Lewis **10.00** Film: The Constant Gardener (2005) **12.30** Film: Tilt Death Us Do Part (1969) **2.25** Wycliffe **3.20** ITV3 Nightscreen **3.40** Emmerdale
ITV4
11.35 Shed and Buried **1.35** Pawn Stars **3.25** Film: The Bubs (1999) **5.30** Film: Blues Brothers 2000 (1998) **8.00** Premiership Rugby Union **9.00** Film: Kull the Conqueror (1997) **11.05** Film: Daylight (1996) **1.20** Ray Mears' Close Encounters **2.15** Ax Men **3.00** Teleshopping
ITV4
12.35 Film: City of Ember (2008) **2.25** Couples Come Dine with Me **4.30** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** Film: Rush Hour 3 (2007) **10.45** The Inbetweeners **11.50** The IT Crowd **12.55** Film: The Sitter (2011) **2.30** How I Met Your Mother **Film4**
1.00 Kiki's Delivery Service (1989) **3.10** Porridge (1979) **5.00** The Dark Crystal (1982) **6.50** The Three Musketeers (2011) **9.00** 71 (2014) **10.55** An Officer and a Gentleman (1982) **1.25** Summer in February (2013) **3.50** Close

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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY
Lucky Christmas, Channel 5, 3.45pm
A single mother struggling to make ends meet thinks her problems are solved when she wins the lottery, only to lose the ticket before she can claim the money. A greedy construction worker offers to help her get it back in exchange for a share of the winnings, only to fall for her while they search for it. Romantic drama, with Elizabeth Berkley. (2011)

TUESDAY
A Bride for Christmas, Channel 5, 3.45pm
A woman swears off serious relationships after breaking off her third failed engagement, only to run into a man who seems perfect for her a month before Christmas. However, she does not realise he has made a bet with his friends that he can persuade a woman to marry him before the holiday begins. Romantic drama, with Arielle Kebbel. (2012)



300, Friday, ITV, 10.40pm

WEDNESDAY
Holiday Help, Channel 5, 3.50pm
A single mother is broke and desperate to get a job so she make her daughter's Christmas a happy one. With the help of an angel, she gets a position at a department store and meets the love of her life. Festive romantic drama, starring Alicia Witt. (2014)

THURSDAY
The Christmas Shepherd, Channel 5, 3.45pm
A widow is devastated when the German shepherd that is her only companion runs away. The dog ends up at an animal sanctuary, and is adopted by the kindly owner and his daughter. When the original owner finally tracks it down, she faces a hard choice between remaining alone and separating the animal from its newfound happiness. Drama, starring Teri Polo and Jordyn Ashley Olson. (2014)

FRIDAY
300, ITV, 10.40pm
Leonidas, fearless king of Sparta, leads 300 of his finest warriors into battle against the invading armies of the ruler of the Persian empire. As the outnumbered Spartans fight for their country, his queen, Gorgo, tries to rally support for her husband at home. Fantasy action adventure, starring Gerard Butler. (2006)

Will Variety prove to be the spice of life?

It's been going since 1912, and even its name harks back to an earlier age of entertainment, but never let it be said that the Royal Variety Performance doesn't move with the times. This year, the show boasts its youngest ever host, comedian Jack Whitehall, who at 27 is no one's idea of a grizzled showbiz veteran. However, that doesn't mean he doesn't have the experience to helm such an occasion – he's become something of a Royal Variety regular. He says: "Having been lucky enough to perform for Prince Charles and Prince William in previous years, I look forward to the opportunity of sailing a little too close to the wind in the presence of Prince Harry this time round."

He added: "It's my third time on the show and I still am yet to perform in front of The Queen, she must be really desperate not to see my act."

In addition to amusing the royals, Whitehall has also co-written and starred in the sitcom *Bad Education*, which follows teacher Alfie Wickers.

However, tonight, the comedian's own ability to keep excitable teenagers in check may be put to the test, as there's at least one act on the bill who should get the younger audience members screaming. They may have recently announced their plans to take an extended break, but all-conquering boy band One Direction are still taking to the stage at the Royal Variety Performance, and they'll be joined by their fellow X Factor graduates Little Mix. But while there's definitely a youthful element to tonight's proceedings, older viewers needn't worry that the organisers have instituted a Logan's Run-style policy of only booking the under-thirties. As ever, the show offers something for everyone. If the members of One Direction and Little Mix want advice on how to make sure they are still being invited back to the Royal Variety Performance in 30 years time, they could always ask Elton John, who is also on the bill. Speaking of music survivors, there's also a rare appearance from Jeff Lynne's ELO. Other music stars

include pop princess and honorary national treasure Kylie Minogue, alongside Ricky Martin, the Corrs, The Killers frontman Brandon Flowers, Josh Groban and American country singer Kacey Musgraves. If you prefer your songs with added jazz hands, there'll also be show tunes from the cast of Disney and Cameron Mackintosh's multi-award winning musical *Mary Poppins*, and British soul sensation Beverly Knight performs a number from the record-breaking musical *Cats*. There's comedy from Chris Ramsey, Romesh Ranganathan and Matt Forde, who provides a political round-up of the year (although given that the show was actually recorded on November 13, there may be some recent events missing). Cirque Du Soleil provide an spectacular acrobatic act, the cast of *Oliver Award 2015* winners *The Play That Goes Wrong* will be hoping everything goes right, and, in what is becoming a new Royal Variety tradition, there's also an appearance by this year's Britain's Got Talent victors, Jules, Matisse and Friends.



The Royal Variety Performance 2015, Tuesday, ITV, 7.30pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY
Las Vegas with Trevor McDonald
ITV, 9pm
According to the popular slogan 'what Happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas' That might work for tourists who are visiting for a wild weekend, but what about the people who actually live and work there? Trevor McDonald is about to find out as he looks beyond the casinos and bright lights to learn the truth about life in Sin City. Among the people he meets is a former high-class call girl, who at the height of her career was earning \$2million a year, and now runs a safe house for prostitutes who are trying to escape the clutches of violent pimps. Meanwhile bail bondsman Jon talks about his dangerous line of work, and the temptations of all those casino. Trevor also meets one of the city's most famous residents, former World Heavyweight Champion Mike Tyson, who discusses his experiences of winning and losing big, and reveals why he's now unlikely to be found on the city's famous Strip.

TUESDAY
8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown Christmas Special
Channel 4, 9pm
Jimmy Carr hosts a festive edition of the comedy panel show's version of the popular and long-

running words-and-numbers quiz. Regular team captains Sean Lock and Jon Richardson are joined by guests Johnny Vegas and Katherine Ryan to provide more comic innuendos, festive surprises and laughs aplenty. Countdown's resident lexicographer Susie Dent takes her usual place in Dictionary Corner with David O'Doherty, while mathematics whizz Rachel Riley is on hand to provide the letters and numbers.

WEDNESDAY
Prey
ITV, 9pm
Last year, this crime drama debuted with an engrossing story starring John Simm as a detective on the run after being framed for his wife's murder. Now it's his Life On Mars co-star Philip Glenister who takes the lead, playing prison officer David Murdoch. While escorting a female prisoner to hospital, his life spirals out of control. David receives a mysterious phone call in which the life of his heavily pregnant daughter is threatened, and must find a way to protect her – even if it

means putting his own existence in jeopardy. Meanwhile, DS Susan Reinhardt is charged with finding him – and working out why David is acting so out of character. Rosie Cavaliero, Sammy Winward and MyAnna Buring co-star.



BBC Music Awards, Thursday, BBC1, 8pm

THURSDAY
BBC Music Awards
BBC1, 8pm
Chris Evans and Fearnie Cotton host the second BBC Music Awards, live from Birmingham's Genting Arena, celebrating a year of musical achievement. Performers include One Direction, Ellie Goulding, Jess Glynne, Little Mix, Hozier, Mumford & Sons and Omi. Artist-producer Jack Garratt is crowned BBC Introducing Artist of the Year and throughout the evening, four other awards will be presented.

FRIDAY
Citizen Khan
BBC1, 8.30pm
Mr Khan enters the Great Sparkhill Bake Off, intent on scooping top honours with his version of the lemon drizzle inside-out cake. Meanwhile, storm clouds gather on the domestic front as Mrs Khan worries that Alia's new boyfriend sounds too rough and needs a good talking to - roping her husband and son-in-law Amjad in to do her bidding. She also makes a discovery that forces Mr Khan to quiz Alia about every father's worst nightmare.

Piers Morgan's Life Stories
ITV, 9pm
Timothy West joins the host to look back on a five-decade career as one of Britain's best-loved actors. The former *EastEnders* star speaks candidly about his 52-year marriage to Fawcett Towers actress Prunella Scales, and the impact of her battle with dementia on their lives. He also reveals the trauma of his first wife's mental health problems, and how he finally made peace with his daughter after several years of estrangement. On a lighter note, Timothy also reflects on his role at the wedding of Prince Charles and Camilla Parker-Bowles, and the time he toured the set of *Coronation Street* – disguised as former Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev.

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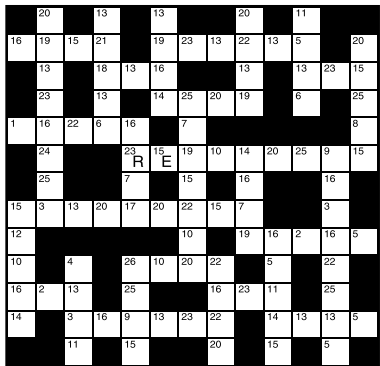
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BRAIN GYM No.354

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

K	U	W	V	X	R	C	Q	D	O	I	G	F
B	P	M	E	L	S	Z	A	N	J	T	H	Y

1	14
2	15 E
3	16
4	17
5	18
6	19
7	20
8	21
9	22
10	23 R
11	24
12	25
13	26

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

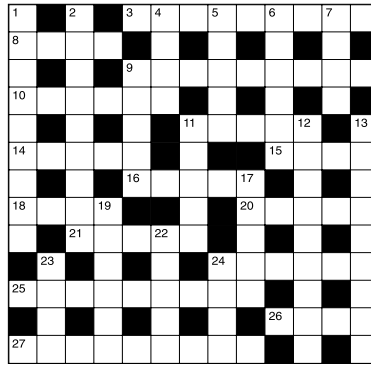
Cryptic Clues:

Across

- Guidance provided by the board? (9)
- Breed that may be rare (4)
- It had short popularity in the fashion-world! (4-5)
- Emotion shown by love in little ways (6)
- In a way age is some protection (5)
- They join the course (5)
- Out of gear! (4)
- Kind of support a painter may need (5)
- Puts out a seat and has a meal (4)
- What could be finer to imply? (5)
- Noted thing to climb (5)
- More than a capital district (6)
- Diagrammatic form of catechism (9)
- A whole chapter may be devoted to him (4)
- Agreed on a fresh kind of drink (9)

Down

- Screw-driver (9)
- They may click at dances (9)
- Is first and last a goddess (4)
- Pick the literary section (5)
- Dupe to act as an usher (4,2)
- Involved in a row, Rosa is upset (4)
- Small creature with nothing to think about (5)
- Set sail on Eastern passage (5)
- Presumably he looks forward to getting on the board (4-5)
- The object wasn't far from causing an accident (4,5)
- Flower I ring up about (5)
- Hide or show (6)
- Set out for a holiday (5)
- Not a sign of a fatal wound! (4)
- This piper has a youthful following (4)



Quick Clues:

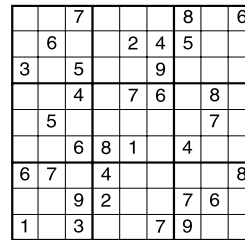
Across

- Theorise (9)
- Leave out (4)
- Burial (9)
- Steps (6)
- Drift (5)
- Mar (5)
- Period (4)
- Indiscretion (5)
- Repair (4)
- Postpone (5)
- Impressive (6)
- Digger (9)
- Incline (4)
- Assuredness (9)

Down

- Odious (9)
- Narrow-minded (9)
- Writes (4)
- Unobstructed (5)
- Dirge (6)
- Melody (4)
- Pastoral poem (5)
- Come to point (5)
- Camouflaged (9)
- Cleansing (9)
- Mistake (5)
- Go away (6)
- Decree (5)
- Spindle (4)
- Humour (4)

Sudoku



Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

2	8	9	4	1	3	6	5	7
7	4	1	5	8	9	2	8	3
5	3	6	7	8	2	4	1	9
3	1	5	6	9	7	8	2	4
4	6	2	8	3	5	7	9	1
9	7	8	1	2	4	3	6	5
8	5	4	2	7	1	9	3	6
1	2	3	9	4	6	5	7	8
6	9	7	3	5	8	1	4	2

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Dock; 3 Remember; 8 Cole; 9 Speaking; 11 Baby-carriage; 13 Landor; 14 Strain; 17 Call for order; 20 Adroitly; 21 Stop; 22 Treasure; 23 Arid. Down: 1 Duckbill; 2 Caliban; 4 Export; 5 Emaciation; 6 Being; 7 Rags; 10 School ties; 12 Intrepid; 15 Auditor; 16 Bowler; 18 Agree; 19 Part. QUICK - Across: 1 Cede; 3 Precious; 8 Ness; 9 Spinster; 11 Exasperation; 13 Spread; 14 Starve; 17 Indisputable; 20 Combined; 21 Tell; 22 Endanger; 23 Type. Down: 1 Converse; 2 Despair; 4 Report; 5 Constitute; 6 Outdo; 7 Sure; 10 Apparition; 12 Revellie; 15 Robbery; 16 Sphere; 18 Nomad; 19 Acme.

Thinking space

Quiz

- The flag of which American state bears the legend 'December 7, 1787'?
- In which year did Jamaica become independent?
- What was the middle name of inventor Thomas Edison?
- What does the French expression 'hors de combat' mean?
- Which country did Margaret, Maid of Norway, rule between 1286 and 1290?
- Who was the first Democrat American president?
- In the Bible, who was the wife of Ahab?
- What nationality is author Ngugi wa Thiong'o?
- Which bird's Latin name is Passer domesticus?
- In which year of the 1970s was the Suez Canal reopened?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 A variety of fennel; 2 Hamilton; 3 International Bank for Reconstruction and Development; 4 Sewing machine; 5 Danzig; 6 Dutch (koolsla); 7 A vent in or near a volcano; 8 Walter Gropius; 9 1975; 10 Toronto.

Niner: CONJUGATE

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

57828 gives cloth,
32192 gives more cloth,
64552 gives silk net.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

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Refurbished Victorian semi in riverside town



THIS refurbished Victorian semi-detached town house in Severn Road, Stourport-On-Severn is for sale through Phipps & Pritchard with McCartneys at £175,000 with no chain.

It has an impressive lounge with a rustic brick fireplace, a staircase to the first floor and a second staircase to a cellar conversion. There is a re-fitted kitchen with larder fridge and utility/cloakroom. There are two first floor bedrooms and re-fitted bathroom, a second floor master bedroom. Contact Phipps & Pritchard 01299 822060 or see www.phippsandpritchard.co.uk



Stunning executive home with a refitted kitchen



THIS stunning executive four-bedroomed detached property in Addenbrook Way, Tipton comes with a contemporary refitted kitchen.

It is for sale through Connells at £269,950.

It has a reception hallway with stairs off, a guest WC, a sitting room with a bay window, a lounge with a feature marble fireplace with an inset living flame gas fire. The conservatory has wood-effect flooring and the refitted kitchen has a splash-back tiling, ceiling spot lights and an under stairs storage cupboard. The dining room completes the ground floor. Upstairs bedroom one has fitted wardrobes and an en-suite shower room, three further bedrooms with wardrobes, a bathroom and a rear garden with a shed and summer house and a driveway providing off-road parking. Contact Connells on 0121 5562338 or visit www.connells.co.uk website.



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HALESOWEN, Church Road£750 pcm+Fees
Detached House in popular residential location with shops, schools and amenities within easy reach. Briefly comprises of: Entrance hallway, lounge, study/bedroom 5, kitchen, downstairs shower room, 4 good size bedrooms, house bathroom with separate wc, driveway for 3 cars, rear garden, gas central heating and double glazing. EPC: TBC.



ROWLEY REGIS, Powke Lane£675 pcm+Fees
A mid three storey ex show home townhouse situated close to local shops and transport links. Featuring gas central heating, downstairs w.c., fitted kitchen, living room, 3 bedrooms, master bedroom with en suite shower room and dressing area with some fitted furniture, house bathroom, front & rear gardens, garage, parking space. EPC: TBC.



QUARRY BANK, Wychbury Road£650 pcm+Fees
This lovely semi detached house has been recently refurbished to a high standard & comprises of hall, extended lounge & kitchen, dining room, 3 bedrooms, bathroom with shower, tandem garage, front and rear gardens, central heating and double glazing. EPC: D



HALESOWEN, Sanderson Place£650 pcm+Fees
Luxury living in Hayley Green. This superb luxury ground floor apartment offers spacious accommodation including open plan lounge/kitchen, 2 double bedrooms, master with en-suite, a further well appointed bathroom with shower, gas central heating, double glazing and allocated parking. EPC: B



HALESOWEN, Waugh Drive£650 pcm+Fees
A spacious and immaculate ground floor apartment situated in this convenient location close to Halesowen town centre, Client Hills and transport links. Comprising of private entrance, hallway, spacious living room, 2 good size bedrooms, fully fitted kitchen with integrated appliances and bathroom. The property further benefits from having well kept communal grounds, garage and parking. Short term Let. EPC: C



HALESOWEN, Hunnington Crescent£625 pcm+Fees
Recently redecorated and carpeted. This huge 3 bedroom town house has had a full redecoration, carpets and boiler. This house will not stay around for long as its so close to Halesowen Town Centre. Featuring 3 bedrooms, a large lounge with stunning views, bathroom with shower, driveway and garage parking, downstairs wc, small low maintenance rear garden. EPC: TBC



CRADLEY HEATH, Wallace Rise£575 pcm+Fees
A beautifully refurbished 3 bedroom and terraced house. This lovely home is situated on the Timberlee Estate and ideal for local schools and bus links. The house features 2 large & 1 single bedrooms, front reception room, brand new kitchen/dining area, new bathroom with shower, good size private rear garden, on road parking. EPC: D



HALESOWEN, Colley Lane £575 pcm+Fees
A superb location close to Merry Hill & Cradley Heath train station is this 2 bedroom semi-detached house comprising of: Hallway, lounge, refitted breakfast/kitchen with oven/hob, upstairs bathroom with shower, 2 bedrooms & a further carpeted loft room, rear patio with astro turf & roller shutter door to parking area, gas central heating. EPC: D



KIDDERMINSTER, Longfellow Green£575 pcm+Fees
TO UNDER GO A FULL REDECORATION BEFORE THE COMMENCEMENT OF A NEW TENANCY. Situated in a cul de sac location and not far from Kidderminster Town Centre and the local train station. Featuring 3 bedrooms, kitchen diner lounge, family bathroom with shower over bath, front and rear garden, gas central heated, fully double glazed. EPC: C



HALESOWEN, Cherry Street£575 pcm+Fees
A well presented modern build property within walking distance to the Town Centre. This unfurnished mid terrace house features: living room, dining kitchen, 2 bedrooms, house bathroom with shower, rear garden, gas central heating, double glazing and rear parking. This property is ideally located for Newfield Park Primary, Halesowen College, Windsor and Earls High School. EPC: G



HALESOWEN, Beecher Road£525 pcm+Fees
1st MONTHS RENT HALF PRICE! An unfurnished semi detached house, close to local shops and transport links to Halesowen, Stourbridge and Birmingham, briefly comprising of: 2 bedrooms, lounge, fitted breakfast kitchen, double glazing, gas central heating, bathroom with shower, front and rear gardens. EPC: E



CRADLEY HEATH, Luanne Close£500 pcm+Fees
Wonderfully presented and with its own balcony. A 1st floor modern apartment, ideally located for Old Hill train station and local shops. Featuring 1 double bedroom and 1 single bedroom, modern kitchen with washer/dryer, lovely lounge with access to your own private balcony, house bathroom with shower, allocated parking. EPC: B



HALESOWEN, Hammersley Close£500 pcm+Fees
Located in the very quiet cul-de-sac, close to local buses to Halesowen, Cradley Heath and Merry Hill, also close to Cradley Heath Train Station, is this unfurnished mid terrace house, comprising of: gas central heating, fitted kitchen, living room, 2 bedrooms, bathroom with shower, rear garden, driveway parking. EPC: G



QUINTON, College Road £475 pcm+Fees
Large flat available above a shop close to direct bus links to Birmingham comprising of lounge, fitted kitchen with oven/hob, 2 large double bedrooms plus extra study/storage room, white bathroom with shower, electric heating. Available Now. EPC: G



HALESOWEN, Stour Court £475 pcm+Fees
A great opportunity to rent this spacious and well proportioned ground floor apartment in a popular location. Large & airy living room, fully fitted kitchen with appliances, 2 double bedrooms, white bathroom suite with shower. Outside there is allocated parking and communal gardens. EPC: C



HALESOWEN, Apperley Way£425 pcm+Fees
Available on a well sought after estate is this unfurnished 1st floor apartment which is well presented throughout, within walking distance to Cradley Heath train station, featuring a modern fitted kitchen, light and airy lounge, bathroom with shower, 1 double bedroom, communal drying area. EPC: C



NETHERTON, St Georges Road£425 pcm+Fees
Beautiful refurbishment in a quiet location. This 1st floor apartment has undergone a complete refurbishment. Features electric storage heating, living room, brand new kitchen, 1 very large double bedroom, brand new house bathroom with shower, rear garden, parking space. Viewing recommended to appreciate this nicely proportioned flat. EPC: D



CRADLEY HEATH, Elbow Street£425 pcm+Fees
An unfurnished ground floor apartment on a popular development, close to Old Hill High Street and the local train station. The property features: living room, fitted kitchen, 1 double bedroom, bathroom with shower. Benefits include electric storage heating, allocated parking space. EPC: D



OLDBURY, Causeway Green Road£425 pcm+Fees
This large, split level flat above shops, within walking distance to bus links and close to J2 of the M5, briefly comprising of: gas central heating, spacious living room, fitted kitchen, 2 double bedrooms, bathroom with shower, parking to rear. Unfurnished. EPC: E



HALESOWEN, Mount Street£395 pcm+Fees
Centrally located and within walking distance to Halesowen town centre is this spacious 1st floor flat features: 1 double bedroom, fitted kitchen, spacious lounge, bathroom with shower over bath, gas central heating, double glazing, on road parking, unfurnished. EPC: TBC



LYE, High Street £330 pcm+Fees
Located in the centre of Lye at Lye Cross. This 2nd floor flat above shops features a large lounge, kitchen, 1 double bedroom, bathroom with shower, and is available immediately. EPC: TBC

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LARGE SEMI DETACHED



Wolverhampton Road

A fantastic opportunity to acquire a large semi-detached house offering spacious accommodation. The property is in need of some general improvement and modernisation. NO UPWARD CHAIN
Porch, large welcoming reception hall, kitchen, utility, downstairs wc, living room, dining room, three bedrooms, bathroom, separate wc, side garage, garden, double glazing where specified, gas boiler heating radiators. EPC= TBC

Offers in the region of £214,950



Halesowen



Royal Oak Road

A traditional style semi detached house tastefully decorated and improved to a good specification spacious well presented family accommodation in popular residential locality. Porch, reception hall, dining room, lounge, fitted kitchen with oven hob and dishwasher, conservatory, store room, downstairs wc/shower room, utility, landing, three good sized bedrooms, well appointed bathroom, extensive lovely gardens, gas boiler heating radiators, double glazed windows as specified. EPC = D

Offers in the region of £264,950

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Oldbury



Warwick Close

End terraced house
* Living room
* Kitchen diner
* Two good sized bedrooms
* Shower room with separate wc
* Ideal for first time buyers *EPC=D

Offers in the region of £124,950



Halesowen



Hamilton Avenue

* Detached house
* Three bedrooms
* Two reception rooms
* Gas central heating
* Double glazing to windows as detailed
* Garage and car port *EPC=D

Offers in the region of £235,000



Halesowen



Oaklands Court

Spies Lane
* Second floor flat
* Living room
* Two bedrooms
* Communal parking
* Communal gardens
EPC= TBC

Offers in the region of £119,950



Halesowen



Manor Abbey Road

* Detached house in need of modernisation
* Full of potential
* Ideal for DIY enthusiasts/builders
* Three bedrooms
* Two reception rooms
* Garage *EPC=G

Offers in the region of £249,950

Rowley Regis



Holly Road

* Ideal for first time buyer/investor
* Terraced House
* Two Bedrooms
* Conservatory
* Good Sized rear garden
* No upward Chain *EPC=D

Offers in the region of £89,950

Quinton



College Road

* Terraced house
* Much improved and modernised
* Re-fitted kitchen/breakfast room
* Three bedrooms
* First floor re-fitted bathroom
EPC=C

Offers in the region of £139,950

Quinton



Bissell Street

* End terraced house
* Re-fitted kitchen
* Three bedrooms
* Re-fitted bathroom
* Garage
EPC=C

Offers in the region of £159,950

Oldbury



Alexandra Court

Pennycricket Lane
* Ground floor purpose built flat
* Two bedrooms, bathroom with shower over bath
* Lounge with focal point fire
* Fitted kitchen with oven hob and extractor
* Allocated parking space * Communal gardens
* Vacant possession available EPC=D

Offers in the region of £75,000

Birmingham



Clent View Road

* Mid terraced House
* Conservatory
* Three bedrooms
* Re-fitted shower/wet room
* Garage in block
EPC=C

Offers in the region of £125,000

Brierley Hill



East Street

* Semi-detached house
* Kitchen/breakfast room
* Living room
* Two bedrooms
* Off road parking
* No upward chain
EPC=D

Offers in the region of £132,500

Rowley Regis



Darby Street

* Semi-detached bungalow
* Kitchen/breakfast room
* Living room
* Dining room/potential second bedroom
* Bedroom
* Garage
EPC=D

Offers in the region of £139,950

Halesowen



Ladysmith Road

* Mid terraced house, ideal first time purchase
* Tastefully presented
* Two reception rooms
* Downstairs bathroom
* Two bedrooms
* Gas boiler heating radiators
* Landscaped garden EPC=D

Offers in the region of £99,950

Halesowen



Lusbridge Close

* Detached house situated in cul-de-sac
* Kitchen/breakfast room
* Utility
* Two reception rooms and conservatory
* Four bedrooms (one with en-suite)
* Garage
EPC=D

Offers in the region of £279,950

Halesowen



The Rosegardens

* Spacious house planned on three floors
* Fitted kitchen/breakfast room/fitted cloakroom
* Lounge leading to conservatory/dining room
* Principal bedroom with en-suite
* Two further bedrooms * House bathroom
* Enclosed gardens, carport and parking space
EPC=C

£169,500

Rowley Regis



Darby Street

* Semi-detached bungalow
* Close to Blackheath town centre
* Reception hall, lounge, kitchen
* Bedroom, bedroom 2/dining room, bathroom
* Pleasant gardens, off road parking, gas boiler radiators
EPC=D

Offers in the region of £125,000

Halesowen



Lyttleton House

Blackberry Lane
* Retirement flat
* Two bedrooms
* Shower room
EPC=C

Offers in the region of £109,950

Halesowen



Gower Road

* Individual Architect Designed Detached House in need of general modernisation & improvement * Fitted Cloakroom, Reception Hall * Living Room Forming Lounge & Dining Area * Breakfast Room, Kitchen & Store Room * 3 Bedrooms * Large Garaging * Extensive Gardens (Side building plot excluded) EPC=E

Offers in the region of £250,000

Quinton



Four Acres

* Three storey town house
* Living room and good sized kitchen
* Three bedrooms
* Garage
EPC=D

Offers in excess of £100,000

Halesowen



Newbury Close

* A Tastefully Presented Detached House
* Fitted Kitchen/Breakfast room * Dining Room
* Lounge Leading to Conservatory
* Principal bedroom with en-suite
* Three further bedrooms
* House Bathroom * Landscaped Private Gardens * Garage EPC=C

Offers in the region of £290,000

Halesowen



Gower Road

* Spacious detached house
* Three bedrooms
* Lounge * Dining room
* Breakfast kitchen & Re-fitted bathroom
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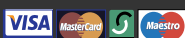
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SAPPHIRE 10m old English Bull Dog, mostly white, good with other dogs and children, vaccinated, spayed.

ZIGGY 8yr paterdale boy, used to children and dogs, chipped.

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01588 676106.

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Two year old lurcher, staffie cross mongrel, lovely girl whose friendly affectionate and who loves everyone, people, children and dogs.

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Gina 07919 607028.

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6
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accommodation to let

A TWO BED FLAT off Tettenhall Rd, CH, DG, Off road parking, £115.50 pw 01902 340073 / 07770 660636.

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ONE BED flat, Netherton area, CH, DG, £100pw, deposit req'd. 07966 283895 or 07976 747022.

TWO BED house, Netherton area, CH, DG, £112 p.w. Dep req'd. No pets. 07976 781003.

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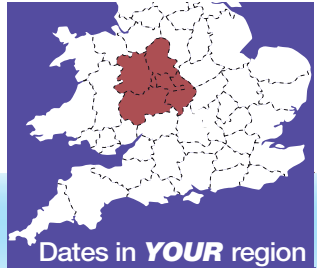
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Women seeking men

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FEMALE, dark haired 5'10, curvy, likes reading, walking, cinema, seeks male 40-50 for lasting relationship. **Text only to Mailbox no:** 5077545

KATIE 35yrs, slender well educated brunette seeks no strings mutual pleasure with gent 40+ Must be discreet, married or single. **ACA. Tel: 0906 515 4294 Box 419673**

PROFESSIONAL black female age 52, enjoys evenings and days out, would like to meet a similar Midlands male. **Text only to Mailbox no:** 5315901

DISCREET man wanted by married lady for no strings fun. I'm called Sarah and am 37yrs. Pls call, **ACA. Tel: 0906 515 4299 Box 418167**

CATHY, 42, good looking brunette with a real passion for life, seeking male for happy times, dates, chats, romance and more. Pls call. **Tel: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420073**

JANE, young 41, very broadminded seeks cheap any age for discreet no strings fun, any age, no time wasters **ACA. Tel: 0906 515 4291 Box: 409715**

FEMALE fun brunette, attractive, 26, seeking male for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 416287**

MAUREEN, discreet sensual lady, 42yrs seeks daytime fun at her home. **ACA. Tel: 0906 515 4275 Box: 405297**

MAGGIE, 72 yrs young, good sense of humour, well presented, WLTm kind, sincere chappie to share coffee and a chat. **Text only to Mailbox no:** 5310040

SOPHIA young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. **Tel: 0906 515 4295 Box: 413399**

LOUISE 35, dark hair, blue eyes, attractive ex air hostess, looking for fun times with older male for romantic nights in and more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420043**

LOUISE, pretty hairdresser, works long hours, finds it hard to meet a boyfriend, 34yrs, own flat. **Text only to Mailbox no:** 4192572

39 yr old independent single Mom, knows the benefit of having a good man in the picture. **Text only to Mailbox no:** 5084796

JENNI, single mum seeks single dad, own home, can accommodate and loves spoiling her man. **Text only to Mailbox no:** 4115108

FRANCES, 45, busty female, loves nights in/out, seeking uncomplicated male who can occupy my free time for quality companionship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420003**

FEMALE, seeks fun loving male who likes a drink and a laugh, to enjoy erotic experiences with a curvy brunette. **Discretion guaranteed. Text only to Mailbox no:** 5079311

MARY, pretty, friendly, lots of fun, lives in Kidderminster loves the theatre, opera, ballet, WLTm a lovely, charming, funny, genuine guy, 30s, to settle down with. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419883**

LOU, 45, lives in Shrewsbury, WLTm a lady between 42-49 with blue eyes, must be kind, caring and funny to mend my broken heart, someone who likes to curl up on the sofa for cozy nights in. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419855**

FREYA 24yr old single mum, looking for male for free time frolics, call me if you're interested, it could be fun! **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419851**

LISA 38 slim attractive blonde, looking for a man who will appreciate a feminine, fashionable, fun, romantic sensual woman with a mind of her own. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419839**

SARAH 38, slim, nice looking, sensual, tactile, no ties, WLTm kind, loving male to enjoy affectionate relationship. Any age/looks. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419821**

PAT 66, attractive, N/S, likes reading, nights out, seeks gent for friendship, days out and more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418277**

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VAL 41, pretty, cuddly, flirty, seeks similar fun loving male for an uncomplicated no strings relationship. Age/looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 416601**

SUSANNAH, 48, curvy female, romantic, warm and cuddly, seeks similar kind male for a loving relationship with lots of cuddles and kisses. Looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 417341**

MID naughty forties female looking fun, thrills and discreet meets, give me a call, you won't be disappointed. Any age with own accommodation. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409105**

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DIVORCED female, attractive, sensual by nature, OHAC, bored with own company looking to make life a little more exciting with likeminded man. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419219**

JANE, 47, voluptuous female, long hair, brown eyes, generous curves, would love to spend cozy nights in with that special male. Age/looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 417985**

LINDA, 47, brown-eyed blonde, caring, loving and honest, many interests, seeks genuine male to share lonely evenings with. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 417211**

JOYCE, affectionate sensitive widow, bit of a romantic, seeks loving male for lots of TLC. Looks unimportant, it's what's in the heart that matters. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419143**

DEBBIE, 29, looking for mature professional fun guy, 40-50 to spend good times with. Call me, you have nothing to lose. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419075**

JULES, sensitive tactile, curvy brunette, hopeless romantic, seeks tall, loving male for fun, friendship and possible LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419033**

VIRGINIA, outgoing social female, 24, tall slim and attractive, looking for fun times, maybe more. Can accommodate/travel. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418845**

HEATHER, well travelled solvent brunette looking to share a large glass of wine and whatever follows with a like minded man friend. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419031**

PAULINE, 49yrs, very attractive, curvy divorcee, affectionate and fun, seeks laid back, sincere male for an uncomplicated, loving relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418925**

VIRGINIA, outgoing social female, 24, tall slim and attractive, looking for fun times, maybe more. Can accommodate/travel. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418845**

LOOKING for the right chemistry with country loving gent who like me is looking for some extra fun in their life. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418843**

LYN, 43, divorced very lonely single mum, young looking, slim, attractive, WLTm similar male for companionship. Age/looks/Status unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418795**

SOPHIA very sensual black lady looking to acquire a new distraction with lots of adult fun thrown in for good measure. Race/age/status unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413399**

JAN 35yr old blue eyed blonde, outgoing, friendly, WLTm passionate guy to share good wine, good conversation, flirting and fun times. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418609**

ATTRACTIVE professional lady, widow, 50's, likes walks, sight seeing, theatre, meals out, seeks genuine, professional gent, 5ft 9ins plus to make life more enjoyable. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418615**

JAN 35yr old blue eyed blonde, outgoing, friendly, WLTm passionate guy to share good wine, good conversation, flirting and fun times. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418609**

SENSUAL tactile, attractive female, long blonde hair, blue eyes, loves travel, winning/dining, WLTm genuine male for mutual companionship. Looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418587**

BROKEN hearted lady 39 seeks loving male to mend heart age 39/40. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box: 4869116**

KAY, very young 45, fit and active, no ties, seeks similar young at heart, fun male for fun times, good conversation, flirting and fun times. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418577**

VIVACIOUS strawberry blonde who knows just what she wants, looking for caring male for spontaneous fun relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418445**

WENDY, 40, slim, fit, bubbly female looking to meet a tall, slim, fit, mature male who thinks he can keep up. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418369**

JO 55, curvy redhead, loves eating out, theatre, travel, looking for middle-aged prince charming to sweep me off my feet. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4464905**

GENUINE lady looking for genuine male, age 58-60, for friendship and to have a laugh with. So if that's you would love to hear from you. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4537136**

PAT 66, attractive, N/S, likes reading, nights out, seeks gent for friendship, days out and more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418277**

68YR old widow, attractive, seeks sincere, N/S male, likes reading, meals out and walks. West Midlands. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 414773**

WENDY, 40, slim, fit, bubbly female looking to meet a tall, slim, fit, mature male who thinks he can keep up. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418369**

EILEEN, slim green eyed brunette likes meals out and cozy nights in, seeks tall male who would make her laugh and brighten up her day. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418347**

FEMALE fun brunette, attractive, 26, seeking male for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 416287**

FEMALE seeking gent 55-70, down to earth, single mum welcome. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 417195**

YOUNG early 40's female, GSOH, kind, caring, considerate, seeks male for friendship, possible romance. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410847**

CAROL, 49, attractive, green eyed blonde, honest warm hearted, n/s with GSOH likes cinema, music, walking, meals out and travel seeking similar male. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4283683**

FEMALE, 50, short blond hair, blue eyes, 5ft 10, slim build, looking for a man 50-55 with salt and pepper hair and GSOH. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4435776**

HEATHER, 34, single very attractive brunette, sensual and interesting, looking to add to life's experiences and adventures with professional male. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418193**

JACKIE lonely and looking for male company. 45-65. Need a bit of love and affection? Then I'm your girl, call me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418169**

JAN, 47, once bitten twice shy! Looking for non OPACated fun times. Attractive, discreet, CHAC, you won't be disappointed. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418089**

EMMA, 43, easygoing female looking to broaden her horizons, WLTm similar male for romantic liaisons. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418009**

SHARON, 48, tall slim attractive, live alone with no ties, love romanticising and WLTm male for good times together, maybe more. Any age. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 417751**

SINGLE mom, 40yrs, small, not skinny WLTm single dad aged 39 to 45. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4295299**

FEMALE, 36, looking for a genuine guy to wine and dine me with lots of laughter and fun times. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4758012**

JULIE, attractive early 40's brunette, size 10, varied interests, WLTm male for fun times, good conversations, spoiling and maybe more. status unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418007**

TRACY, slim attractive cheerful brunette, enjoys aromatherapy/massage, looking for male who appreciates a feminine, sensual lady. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 417787**

BOSTON female 56 loyal, intelligent, lusty history seeks dependable humorous male for friendship. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4751421**

TRACY, slim attractive cheerful brunette, enjoys aromatherapy/massage, looking for male who appreciates a feminine, sensual lady. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 417787**

THEA, 36, extrovert brunette, curly hair, rugby fan, WLTm genuine male who will accept her as she is. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 417763**

ATTRACTIVE kind, caring, single lady, loves animals, WLTm uniformed office for genuine, sincere relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 417623**

FEMALE fun brunette, attractive, 26, seeking male for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 416287**

Men seeking women

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WAYNE, 40, cheeky, good career, likes gym. Looking for a lady who likes stimulating conversation and times. **Tel No: 0906 515 4343 Box No: 419829**

DARREN, 44, slim build, dark brown hair, green eyes, seeks genuine female for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418089**

VERY useful, attractive 58 yr old, GSOH, six foot tall, nice build, n/s, genuine, tactile, fit and sporty, looking for a women for nights in and out. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420135**

MICHAEL, school teacher, very shy and lonely, 42yrs, own home, car, seeks genuine caring lady. **Text only to Mailbox no: 4156551**

COLIN, live foot eight, blue eyes, bundle of fun to be around, likes growing tuchias for showing, vintage tractor for showing, weekends away, going out and staying in WLTm a lady for friendship/LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420089**

STEVE 39, 5ft 9ins, medium build, likes walks, seeks female, slim-medium build, single mum welcome. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420089**

SFT well built guy, nicely groomed looking for fun intimate nights or day with slim/medium build attractive lady 35-55. **Text only to Mailbox No: 5132460**

ALAN, 56 year old builder, muscular build, five foot ten, fit, likes the gym, pubs, clubs and days out, seeks female with similar interests. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419975**

ATTRACTIVE, fit, sporty, tactile, youthful black male seek relationship with lady, N/S. **Text only to Mailbox no: 4851641**

WIDOWER, quiet, easygoing, slim, 5ft 7 tall, smart, varied interests, seeks slimish lady, 50 to 65 yrs for caring relationship. **Text only to Mailbox no: 4906469**

TIM, easygoing honest male, discreet, uninhibited, seeks similar non-conformist averagely attractive, N/S female up to 65. **Notts. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418465**

LEE, 50, seeking an Asian female for discreet fun and maybe more. Dudley area. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419401**

ANDREW 53, widower, honest, genuine, caring, tactile, GSOH. Kidderminster based, hoping to love again with a decent loving lady. **Text only to Mailbox no: 4911450**

45 year old male with varied interests WLTm female 35 to 55 for fun and friendship and hopefully more. **Text only to Mailbox no: 4215562**

MATURE male, 50, medium-build, varied interests, seeks true Christian female, 35-45, who enjoys evenings in and dining out, for friendship or possibly more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419283**

MARK 40, 5ft 9ins, brown hair/eyes, attractive, good looking, OHAC/business, likes walks, day trips, cinema, seeks similar female. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 348239**

PROFESSIONAL male, 41, own business, likes to enjoy life, clubs, pubs, cinema, gym, seeks similar female. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 360283**

MALE 45yrs old, self-employed motor trader/mechanic, medium build, green eyes, average looks. I am a nice genuine and honest person looking for similar lady to share a honest permanent relationship and happy times. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418709**

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MIKE late 60's fit, active, genuine and generous, very passive seeks assertive lady any age / looks for mutual benefits. **Text only to Mailbox no: 4747481**

STOCKY, bold, unhappily married man, seeks similar very discreet female for exciting rendezvous. **Text only to Mailbox no: 4757315**

ATTRACTIVE tall black male would like to meet female for day time fun and discreet meetings, any age or location. **Text only to Mailbox no: 5077442**

MATURE male, 50, medium-build, varied interests, seeks true Christian female, 35-45, who enjoys evenings in and dining out, for friendship or possibly more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419283**

GENTLEMAN, 57, slightly mad but not bad, who will make you ever so glad that you answered his ad! **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419307**

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WINK 26

ADVENTUROUS 35yr old, slim, dark hair, likes music, cycling and photography, seeks female for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 417235**

JAMES GSOH, likes theatre, meals out, socialising, seeking easy going female, 35-55. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 417469**

PETE 47, enjoys walking, meals out, seeks female, age/looks/status unimportant, with similar interests for adult fun text only. **Text only to Mailbox no: 5063152**

MALE 60s WLTm genuine fun lady, 50/60s nights in or out, likes swimming, walks, music, good food etc for friendship or more. **Text only to Mailbox no: 4852727**

TIM, easygoing honest male, discreet, uninhibited, seeks similar non-conformist averagely attractive, N/S female up to 65. **Notts. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 375065**

PAUL 50yrs, Birmingham, with own house and own car, I have a good sense of humour and I like going out, I'm looking for the right girl for friendship/relationship. Call me when you can. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418465**

45 year old male with varied interests WLTm female 35 to 55 for fun and friendship and hopefully more. **Text only to Mailbox no: 4215562**

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Delivering luxury of time

By James Parker

Volvo Cars' ongoing research into autonomous driving has confirmed what we all know - that the daily commute is taking the joy out of driving. It is during the commute and on long motorway trips that people are most willing to delegate the act of driving to their car.

With this in mind, Volvo has developed Concept 26, named to reflect the average daily commute to work of 26 minutes* - time that could be spent doing something more meaningful than sitting in stop-start traffic. Volvo has set out to bring choice and freedom back to the driver; to enjoy the

driving experience when they want to, or to delegate driving to the car when they want to do something else.

"It's all about people. Our research clearly shows that some people will want to use their commuting time creatively when they have full autonomous drive available, while others will want to just sit back and relax, watch online media or listen to music. Autonomous drive will make all of this possible. This is what Concept 26 has captured by reimagining the entire car experience," said Robin Page, vice president of interior design at Volvo Cars.

Concept 26 is based around an all-new patented seat design that actively cradles the driver during the transformation phase into one of the three modes: Drive, Create or Relax. With these three modes the concept creates a new autonomous drive innovation platform that can adapt to new needs and technologies over time.

When the driver wishes to delegate driving to the car, the steering wheel retracts, the seat reclines and a large display emerges from the dashboard allowing the driver to enjoy the time spent in the car as they like. Concept 26 embraces the need for radical change of the basic design of car interiors and provides a space that can be used as the driver/passenger wishes.

Concept 26 opens up a new paradigm of possibilities in the car - from entertainment to service provision and beyond, using the technology that is now a natural part of our everyday lives. It also signals the huge potential for new business opportunities and high-tech collaborations that autonomous drive will bring.

"We have gone to great lengths to understand the challenges and opportunities that



'We have gone to great lengths to understand the challenges and opportunities that autonomous cars will bring to people in coming years.'

autonomous cars will bring to people in coming years, and our flexible approach to engineering and design, enabled by our new Scalable Product Architecture, means that we can readily bring this from concept to reality," said Dr Peter Mertens, senior vice president research and development at Volvo Car Group.

Volvo Cars' ongoing Drive Me research project, which will see an extended fleet of fully autonomous cars driving real customers on the roads of Gothenburg, Sweden, in 2017 is further proof that Volvo is a lead-

er in autonomous drive technology, building firmly on its foundation of safety.

"Volvo Cars is among the first to address the subject of self-driving cars and liability. We firmly believe that car makers should take full responsibility for the actions of the car when it is driving in full autonomous mode. If a manufacturer does not accept liability, it clearly implies that they are not confident about their autonomous drive technology," said Dr Peter Mertens.

*Based on research of the average commute time in the United States



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A hard worker and loyal

By Matt Kimberley

It's the most important Vauxhall arriving this year. Has the compact hatch got the magic to take on its key rivals?

The Astra is an underrated, but ever-green compact family hatch, as happy taking the kids on a short break away as it is cutting a path through the city. There's no radical departure for 2016, although the sharp-eyed will notice a nip here and a tuck there.

There's an excellent new colour touch-screen that's standard across the range. It gives the whole product a lift and helps it make a better first impression.

It's a sharp-looking thing, if a bit on the conservative side. Being built in Britain won't do its appeal this side of Dover any harm, either.

Whichever model you choose, you end up with a pleasantly stylish and definitely inoffensive car. You'll never object to having it on your drive.

It's quite sensitive to trim grades, though, so whereas the fantastic top-spec cars with all the interior trimmings look like they've come straight from the top drawer, the fragile rubberised handbrake grip and cheap-looking plastics on the low-end versions leave a lot to be desired and can start to look tatty very quickly.

There's a handy boot at the back, more than big enough for most tasks, but if you're toting babies, you'll struggle to get much more than a chunky pushchair into it without putting the conveniently split rear seats down.

Front seaters will be happy enough, especially with the uncommonly well-shaped seat backs that give superb lumbar support. The glove box is shed-spacious but the door pocket shapes and cupholder designs could be better thought out.

Under the bonnet there is a 1.0-litre turbocharged petrol engine. It can't make the Astra a rocket ship, but if you're gentle, you'll see fuel economy you'd struggle to better in an eco-diesel.

I found it no problem to hover around 60mpg in relatively traffic-free driving. Alright, you do need to put some effort in, but the potential is there.

Linear

The dinky engine is perfect for chopping around urban and suburban routes. It's impressively linear once the turbo kicks in, making it smooth, forgiving and easy to get used to.

It warms up faster than a moth on a sunbed and it's perfect for no-fuss short trips. The five-speed gearbox is light and precise, with tall gearing that partly offsets the lack of a sixth, but it's clear this version isn't meant to cover serious motorway mileage. It's a nice steer, though, responding quite keenly to tugs at the wheel and scampering along winding roads with gusto.

The brakes on this nearly-new car were very grabby, but that should hopefully settle down with mileage.

The Astra is a solid car.

You know what you're getting and, although some of the materials on basement models aren't up to scratch, at the very least, the car does a good job of providing straight-down-the-line mid-size transport for people who don't want to spend the extra on



'Whichever model you choose, you end up with a pleasantly stylish and definitely inoffensive car.'

a slightly more spacious compact crossover or SUV.

Vauxhall dealers are usually open to a little haggling, too, so don't take the retail price as gospel.

You should pay less than for a broadly equivalent crossover, so there's good value to be had here even if the fashion is currently for faux-4x4s.

This is a car for ordinary people. People who want a well-rounded car to give them transport, enough space and, crucially, the ability to cope with everything from taking

the in-laws to Sunday lunch to taking the kids to the seaside.

Parents will appreciate this sort of versatility, while some might prefer the lower seating position relative to SUVs, for the better outward view it offers during low-speed manoeuvres.

This car summed up in a single word: Studious.

If this car was a student at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, it would be in Hufflepuff house. It's a hard worker and a loyal companion.

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Light, handy and fun ride

By John Griffiths

Modern, sculpted good looks apart, there's not too many surprises in the package that makes up Honda's new middleweight contender in the roadster class, the CB650F.

But it's nevertheless an excellent, value-for-money machine at £6,399 which is likely to attract admiring glances in the bikers' cafe car park and provide lots of fun on the road.

Honda's previous middleweights, the CBF600 and the Hornet 600, were based on the running gear of the company's CBR sports machine but with the engine retuned to produce more usable power in the low to middle areas of the rev range.

The new CB650, with 86bhp on tap, gets the same treatment. It sits neatly between its two predecessors in terms of outright power with a theoretical top speed of 130mph (theoretical except on the track, that is).

It's particularly well balanced so that it feels lighter than its 208kgs suggests.

While it's lighter than some of its four cylinder rivals, it's slimmer too and comes with a reasonable 810mm seat height, factors which combine to make it feel particularly agile around town as well as on the open road.

The electronic fuel injection provides for smooth, progressive and controllable power delivery through the slick, six-speed gearbox.

While the maximum horses are unleashed at 11,000rpm, the engine remap

means peak torque is available a lot lower down – about 8,000rpm. Indeed, you don't even need that big a twist of the right wrist – at anything above 4,000rpm in almost any gear the CB650 leaps forward to make the most of overtaking opportunities. Such a wide power band makes it very rideable in everyday road conditions.

Once on the move, the CB650 is a bit of a revelation. I've ridden dedicated sports bikes which feel heavier and slower to change direction as you flick left and right through the twisty bits.

It's pretty much effortless, and comfortable too as the bars are set wide and high for a pleasant, upright riding position which reduces strain on the neck and back.

Comfortable

The twin seat is well-shaped and comfortable, and you get grab handles for a pillion passenger as well as luggage hooks.

At motorway speeds there is surprisingly little buffeting for a naked bike.

I do struggle with some of the intricacies of aerodynamics but it may be that the Honda engineers have it cracked with just a small, well-shaped 'pod' around the headlight to deflect the wind.

It was certainly a contrast to another 'naked' bike I had ridden only the day before, where 20 miles along a motorway left me feeling wind battered and with aching arms. This had only a big round headlight to bash its way through the air.

Behind the headlight pod is the new electronic instrument cluster: a large and clear digital speedo in the centre of an analogue tachometer on the left, with fuel gauge, clock, trip and warning lights on the right.

The brakes are well up to the task, with



Excellent, value-for-money machine at £6,399 which is likely to attract admiring glances.

twin 320mm 'wavy' discs at the front and 240mm disc at the rear. The lever action is nicely progressive with plenty of 'feel'.

With a 17.3 litre fuel tank, you get adequate range with an estimated average consumption of between 45 and 50mpg, depending on conditions (and, of course, how you ride).

The 17-inch cast aluminium wheels are shod with 120/70 rubber at the front,

and 180/55 at the rear. The CB650F has aggressive, 'streetfighter' looks which to some extent disguise the fact that it's rather benign and easy to ride, with plenty of performance to satisfy most riders' requirements in this category.

Light and handy for manoeuvring around town, it's also more fun than you might expect from a 650 on winding A and B roads.

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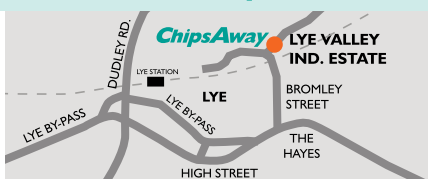
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Hales have to hold on to keep their victory

Old Halesonians 26 Lichfield 24
THE Home side took the game by the scruff of the neck from the kick off, starting with the first of many tackles from skipper Richie Taylor.

One on a Lichfield forward caused a knock on giving the Old Hales pack the opportunity to show their dominance in the scrum.

The scrum saw Lichfield being moved backwards giving the back line the chance to run with the ball from the halfway line with Carl and Andy Robinson working their way towards the opposition 22.

A Robinson finally kicked the ball through a gap for winger Andy Holloway to dive over the line for the first Try of the day after only five minutes. Oli Rayner converted.

Lichfield made progress and mauled the ball over the line and converted. On 25 minutes Lichfield slotted a penalty from 40 yards giving the away side the lead.

Smarting from their lack of points despite dominating possession, Old Hales then managed to put together a passage of play which saw winger Luke Smith flying over in the corner for a score.

Old Hales continued in the same vein and were rewarded with another try. This time by centre Ben Barkley working his way through for the points. Rayner converted.

The second half saw hooker Sam Jones drive over for the fourth and bonus point try, again converted by Rayner.

A yellow card saw Old Hales reduced to 14 which gave Lichfield enough of an advantage to score.

Kenny denies approach to take QPR job

Wolves boss Kenny Jackett insists he hasn't been approached by QPR for their vacant manager's job.

Rumours are rife that the London club have launched a formal bid to prise Jackett from Wolves.

Rangers are said to have Jackett high on their shortlist to replace Chris Ramsey, who was sacked earlier this month.

Jackett, however, denied that QPR had contacted him – and committed his future to Wolves.

The 53-year-old has close ties to London and spent three years at Loftus Road as assistant to Ian Holloway from 2001 to 2004. Jackett said of the speculation: "It's not my position to talk about others clubs. But there hasn't been any approach to myself, or as far as I'm aware, the club, so there's nothing to say on it. "I'm committed to Wolves."

Old Hales enjoy a clean sweep

OLD Halesonians Hockey Club completed a clean sweep of victories across all their sides this weekend for the first time this season.

The Mens 1st XI beat Edgbaston 2-1 at King Edward Five Ways in their Warwick Printing Midlands One fixture, but it was a real jekyll and Hyde performance from the hosts.

The first half was as dull as the weather, as Hales struggled to keep possession or muster any chances of note.

However, Edgbaston could not take advantage, as yet again Hales' rearguard proved a tight unit to break through.

After stern words at half-time, the hosts improved

and finally started to put passes together and create chances. It was through their first meaningful attack they scored.

Tom Durnford drove into the D to win a short corner and from the resulting play, the ball broke to Graham Knight whose reverse hit strike found the bottom corner.

The goal galvanised the hosts and they soon doubled their lead as Josh Randhawa poked the ball home after an initial shot from Knight was saved.

Edgbaston fought back and claimed a consolation goal, but they could not find an equaliser before the final whistle.

The result consolidates Hales in third place, three

points off second placed Loughborough Town. After the game, captain Paul Woodall said, "We proved that possession doesn't guarantee you points, it's about creating chances and taking them and that's what we did." Hales travel to Coventry and North Warwick this Saturday.

Other results saw the Ladies end their recent losing streak defeating Stourport 5ths 2-1 with goals from Molly Kelly and Rae Andrews.

The men's section saw the 2nds, 3rds and 4ths complete 5-0 victories, against Finchfield, Telford and Sutton Coldfield respectively. The Mens 5ths won 3-2 against Edgbaston and the Badgers completed the set, with a 4-0 victory over Worcester.

Whiley considering sports awards snub

JORDANNE WHILEY may boycott this year's BBC Sports Personality of the Year awards ceremony after no para-athlete was selected for the ceremony's main award.

Tennis player Whiley had been invited to the traditional annual event by the BBC, which is being held at the SSE Arena in Belfast this year, but is now reconsidering whether to accept after the release of the extended 12-athlete shortlist.

And the 23-year-old from Halesowen – who won two doubles grand slam titles and her first US Open singles title – is not disappointed for herself, more concerned for disability sport as a whole.

"I'm not in any way saying I should be nominated, I'm just disappointed to see no para-athlete recognised," she said.

"Now we are in a time where we are coming up to the Rio Games and paralympic sport is dripping with so many successful athletes and it no-one has been nominated."

She added: "They had asked me to go to Sports Personality of the Year, so I thought maybe I'm up for something, but when no para-athletes were nominated, I'm questioning whether I will go.

Deserving

"I haven't made up my mind yet."

Reflecting on those who would have been deserving of a nomination, Whiley said: "There are so many but someone like Hannah Cockcroft – she went to Doha and won three gold medals, as well as breaking two world records this year."

Despite the disappointment, Whiley was warmed by the support she received on social media after posting her dismay on Twitter, and even went as far to gauge public opinion for a disabled Sports Personality of the Year award.

"The public love paralympic sport – we are good at getting behind our sports stars across the board, whether that's able-bodied or para," she said.

"I got so much support on twitter for paralympic sport in general when it came out, which is good."

Whiley spoke as she met Great Britain's Davis Cup-winning team at Lee Valley Hockey & Tennis Centre in Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park,



Jordanne Whiley and dad Keith take a closer look at the Davis Cup at the Olympic Park

where the end-of-season Masters will be held, with Whiley seeded fourth for the singles event.

She will face Dutch world No. 1 Jiske Griffioen, Germany's world No. 5 Sabine Ellerbrock and fellow Brit Lucy Shuker over three successive days in the NEC Wheelchair Tennis Masters this week.

●Double speedway world champion Tai Woffinden is not sure what more he can do to get speedway recognised on a bigger stage after being snubbed yet again

by the BBC Sports Personality of the Year panel.

The Wolverhampton asset was ignored in 2013 when he became Britain's first speedway world champion in 13 years.

"I was in touch with their office to ask if I was in the running because I would need to delay my flight back to Australia," said the 25-year-old. "All I got was an email back saying 'thanks, enjoy your trip to Australia' – so I knew then I wasn't in the running."

Dominant Tivs are handed a shock defeat

CARLTON Town 5 Tivdale 2

In a game that was labelled a six-pointer and possibly the defining one of the season, Tivdale promised so much but ended with nothing against a side also in the bottom three of Evo-Stik Division One South.

The pitch required an inspection on the morning of the game after heavy rain for most of the previous week up in Nottingham and after passing the game was going to be played on a very heavy pitch.

No-one could have seen what was to come as Tivdale started much the better with chances for Malachi Farquharson and Chris Sterling.

But as can always happen when you don't make the pressure tell, Carlton took the lead with their first shot on target on 37 minutes when Daniel Gordon curled a free-kick over the wall and into the top corner.

On 43 minutes Tivdale were back in the game when Sterling netted from the penalty spot after Chris Rabone had been fouled.

Sterling gave Tivi the lead a minute after the break with a curling shot.

But on 57 minutes Carlton levelled as a Joe Fitzpatrick free-kick out by the corner flag somehow ended up in the back of the Tivdale net.

Sterling passed up the chance to complete a hat-trick and the home side took Tivdale apart in the final 15 minutes as Romaine Graham, Josh Rae and Fitzpatrick, with his second goal, took advantage of some poor defensive work to wrap up the three points.

Tigers get their claws into Dudley

Trysull 4 Team Dudley 0

TRYSUILL Tigers left Team Dudley licking their wounds with a 4-0 victory in West Midlands Division One.

The students went behind after 19 minutes when Stephen Rickhuss played in Ross Melrose to slot a shot past keeper Liam Jones.

Six minutes later Trysull doubled the lead when Jonathan Patrick's shot from half-way was carried into the net by the wind.

The final two minutes were ones to forget for TD with a double blow.

After losing the ball in midfield, a perfect cross found Jack Johnson who rounded Jones to make it 3-0. Then, right at the death, Trysull broke away and Johnson finished off the move abruptly with a simple finish.

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Talks over future can wait, Olsson

JONAS OLSSON insists any talks over his future can wait as the defender concentrates on his Albion renaissance.

The 32-year-old centre-back made his first appearance in nearly two months in November's 2-1 win over Arsenal and impressed enough to keep his place for Sunday's 1-1 draw at West Ham.

Olsson's current deal expires at the end of the season but the Sweden international claims that is not something which concerns him right now.

"It's not something I honestly think a lot about, it will come naturally," he said. "If I play a lot in the run-up to Christmas and throughout the season then maybe it's natural for me to stay here."

"It's a question for the club as well. I'm not stressed about the situation, I'm quite comfortable with the way things are now."

"I think the club feels the same way so we'll have to see."

An £800,000 buy from NEC Nijmegen, Olsson has gone on to make more than 300 appearances for the club.

He was a regular in the starting line-up before missing much of last season with an Achilles injury and his future looked uncertain when head coach Tony Pulis brought in defensive reinforcements during the summer.

But Olsson has pushed ahead of £8million signing James Chester in the pecking order and, though he remains open-minded about what is to come, remains confident he is part of the boss' plans.

"People sometimes say 'why don't you play abroad?' but I'm already abroad," he said. "For me I don't have a problem going somewhere else and widening my perspective."

"That said, I really like it here."

Delight as Melvin is added to the Yeltz attacking arsenal

HALESOWEN Town boss John Hill has spoken of his delight over new addition Malcolm Melvin.

The creative midfielder joins Shaun Rowley and Dan Summerfield, who arrived through the door at The Grove late last week.

Boss Hill said: "Malcolm is an attacking midfielder with a very good work ethic."

He is very good on the ball and I feel this is something we have been lacking and have needed for a while."

The pair both impressed during their debut on Saturday.

Eighteen-year-old shot-stopper Rowley, who signed his first professional contract with League One outfit Shrewsbury Town in the summer, arrives on loan as cover for the stricken Daniel Platt, who is missing for a couple of months with an eye injury.

Right-back Summerfield arrives from Welsh side Merthyr Town, where he played a big part in their Championship winning season last year.

Dean buzzes off after deal with Bees

MANY Walsall fans believe their promotion dreams are in tatters following the shock departure of boss Dean Smith.

Smith and assistant manager Richard O'Kelly left the Banks's Stadium on Monday to join Championship side Brentford.

The news has been met with dismay by the majority of Saddlers supporters who, after an impressive start to the season, had hoped Smith would stay to mastermind their push for the Championship.

Smith and O'Kelly were in the crowd on Monday night to watch their new side in action against Bolton at the Macron Stadium. Now the Saddlers

Football

begin life without their old management team.

Coaches John Ward, Jon Whitney and Neil Cutler will be in charge of team affairs.

And in another surprise twist, reports emerged that Salop boss Micky Mellon could be one of the names in the frame to replace Smith at the Banks's.

Coach Ward is the early favourite.

"After rebuffing interest from a Championship club last month, the Saddlers successfully agreed a new 12-month rolling contract with Dean," the

statement said. "However, at the time of signing he requested assurances from the club that he would be given the opportunity to speak to any interested parties regarding any future job opportunities should they arise." Brentford are believed to have targeted Smith after a move for Swansea assistant manager Pep Clotet collapsed last week.

And the Walsall club statement confirmed the Bees made their approach in the build-up to Saturday's win over Bradford.

"After an approach from Brentford ahead of our game against Bradford City on Saturday - Dean indicated his desire to speak to the Championship outfit," it read.

JOSH'S BRACE STOPS YELTZ

Halesowen 0 Sutton Coldfield 2

TWO first-half goals from Sutton Coldfield centre forward Josh McKenzie knocked Halesowen out of the Doodson League Cup.

The Royals' dangerman first struck in the sixth minute after hesitation from Halesowen central defender Joe Hull let in McKenzie and he easily slotted past goalkeeper Shaun Rowley.

McKenzie capitalised on another Yeltz defensive mistake to hit his second goal when he pinched the ball from Kyle Morrison before stroking a precise finish past Rowley after half an hour.

The Yeltz made a good response late in the first half with visiting goalkeeper James Harrison denying Nathan Waite.

Keyon Refell then burst through seconds before the interval but drove his final shot wide.

Halesowen made little impression against the solid Sutton defence in the second half although Nathan Waite curled just wide in the 50th minute and shots from substitute Luke Connolly and Reece Hales were blocked after 73 minutes.

Rushall 0 Halesowen 0

Halesowen Town left Rushall Olympic with a point as they played out a goalless draw in the Evo-Stik Premier.

Luke Benbow introduced Halesowen's new keeper Shaun Rowley to the game early on when he forced him into a save low down.

Rowley was pleased to see the ball caught under Zak Martin's feet before he could shoot before veteran Asa Charlton produced two good tackles to deny Alex Reid.

Kris Taylor forced another save from Rowley, who was impressive in the first half as he also saved from Reid, Benbow and Jake Heath.

The visitors' best chance came when Jean Michel-Gueyes fired straight at Dean Coleman from close range before Rowley produced his best save so far - diving to his left to keep out Jack Duggan, who went close earlier on.

Reid tried to square for Heath early on in the second half but good defending from Aaron Griffiths prevented the midfielder from having a tap in.

Lambert ruins it for Hammers



Albion's Rickie Lambert is swamped by his team-mates after levelling against West Ham

West Ham 1 Albion 1

AS lazy a cliché as a game of two halves may be, it was nevertheless the only appropriate way to sum up what was in all likelihood Albion's last ever visit to the Boleyn Ground.

By half-time, the only surprise was how the visitors were just a single goal behind, indebted as they were to their keeper, Boaz Myhill, for keeping the score down with fine saves.

Yet by full-time, Tony Pulis' men were left to reflect on a more than deserved point which might well have been three but for some lax finishing and the superb goalkeeping of West Ham's Adrian.

The turnaround came courtesy one man, Rickie Lambert, who took the frustrations of the low key start to his Albion career out in 45 minutes of determination and no little skill, in which he looked every inch the Premier League marksman the club thought they were getting when he arrived from Liverpool last summer.

It wasn't just the fact he played a direct role in the equaliser, when his shot deflected off the hand of Hammers skipper Winston Reid, sending it in a direction which even a keeper of Adrian's quality could not keep out.

This was a valuable draw which backed up the superb home win over Arsenal.

Boxing bill is back at Town Hall

RYAN Aston will tick over and Ricky Summers will return in six-rounders when professional boxing returns to Dudley Town Hall.

The venue hosts paid pugilists for the first time in eight-and-a-half years on Saturday, with Paul 'PJ' Rowson again the promoter.

Darren McDermott headlined the last card there on Thursday 28 June 2007, winning the Midlands middleweight title with a second round stoppage of Conroy McIntosh.

"The Black Country Bodysnatcher," now 35 and retired, moved on from there to win the English crown and challenge for both the British and Commonwealth belts.

Now the new generation of fighters will be expected to restore old glories with Dudley's Aston - who was coached by McDermott as a child at Priory Park Boxing Club - top of the bill.

"Tank" is a top contender to the English light middleweight strap, having defeated Nathan Graham by fourth round TKO in an eliminator.

The 24-year-old southpaw tunes up against Christian Hoskin-Gomez, who should provide stubborn opposition after his recent run.

The Devon-based Spaniard, with 13 bouts on his record at just 20, has taken two points wins and a draw from his last three outings.

He's boxed in the Black Country before, too, and went the distance with Midlands super middleweight champion Andrew Robinson last year.

Tipton's Summers provides chief support in his first outing for nearly nine months, after taking a break and switching coaches to join up with Jon Pegg.

Tickets, are £35, £50 ringside and £70 stage, are on sale now. For more information, call 07976 283 157.

Grealish is still in Garde's bad books

REMI Garde looks set to prolong Jack Grealish's exile from Villa's first team squad for another week.

It is understood Garde has ordered 20-year-old Grealish to continue to train with Villa's development squad since being photographed at a Manchester nightclub hours after Villa were thrashed 4-0 by Everton.

The news will come as a blow to Solihull-born Grealish, after talk that the Villa boss was prepared to bring him back into the first team reckoning for Saturday's trip to Southampton.

Garde had branded the talented youngster's actions as unprofessional.

★★★

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